

Stay Safe

Install locks on doors and windows, ensuring they're locked while you're away. Consider investing in a home security system with cameras and alarms to deter potential intruders. Well-lit exteriors and trimmed bushes remove hiding spots, enhancing visibility and discouraging unlawful activity.



Berrien County Sheriff's Office
Crime Prevention Unit
919 Port Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
(269) 983-7141 Ext. 7221
www.bcsheriff.org



Sheriff, Chuck Heit

 FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR UP-TO-DATE • CRIME PREVENTION & SAFETY TIPS

‘American Pickers’ to pick through southwest Michigan in March



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN — A national television show is on the hunt for local collections to “pick” through in southwest Michigan.

According to a news release, “American Pickers” plans to film episodes in Michigan in March.

The hit History Channel show, which has been airing since 2010, is a documentary series that explores the world of antique “picking,” following stars Mike Wolfe and Danielle Colby as they hunt for America’s most valuable antiques.

Items they look for include: vintage

bicycles, toys, unusual radios, movie memorabilia, advertising, military items, folk art, vintage musical equipment, vintage automotive items, early firefighting equipment, vintage clothing and pre-50’s western gear.

Collectors interested in being considered for “American Pickers” can send their name, phone number, location and description of the collection with photos to: americanpickers@cineflix.com or call (646) 493-2184.

Only private collections will be considered.

The news release is as follows:

The American Pickers are excited to return to Michigan! They plan to

film episodes of The History Channel hit television series throughout your area in March 2025.

AMERICAN PICKERS is a documentary series that explores the fascinating world of antique “picking” on The History Channel. The hit show follows skilled pickers in the business, as they hunt for America’s most valuable antiques.

They are always excited to find historically significant or rare items, in addition to unforgettable Characters and their collections.

As they hit the back roads from coast to coast, the Pickers are on a

See PICKERS, Page A8

New member appointed to Edwardsburg Planning Commission

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg Village Council held their first regular meeting at the new time of 6 p.m. on Monday.

The Council voted to fill a vacancy on the Village of Edwardsburg Planning Commission after President Dennis Peak cast the tie-breaking vote. The vacancy, left by Trustee John Sharp after he won election to the village council in November, will be filled by Jo Duke. Though Duke lives outside of the village, ordinance allows for a member of the planning commission who resides outside of the village as long as they have an interest within the village. Duke owns property in Edwardsburg and is involved in the robotics program at Edwardsburg Public Schools.

Duke’s approval came after much discussion about the council’s lack of familiarity with her. Trustee Garwood voted yes on the appointment, though he noted a preference that the allowance for commissioners from outside the village be held for those bringing a specific skill or interest to the board. Trustees Hughes and Stoner both voted no and questioned whether the vacancy should be advertised by the village.

Garwood also reported that the planning commission had officially approved their new by-laws and voted on new officers. Gordon Carr was voted in as Chair, Jackie Lazaro was voted in as Secretary, and Garwood was chosen as Vice Chair.

The council discussed diversifying village certifi-

cate of deposit investments, which are all currently held at Circle Federal Credit Union to a level extending beyond that covered by Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Insurance. A movement of two CDs to a new financial institution was suggested both as a method of diversifying for security and to take advantage of higher municipal interest rates offered elsewhere.

Peak expressed his gratitude for the peaceful transfer of power that occurred earlier in the day during the Presidential Inauguration. He noted “we make decisions on this council based on what’s best for the people in Edwardsburg” and hoped that those in government at the state and federal level would be similarly diligent about their decisions.

Peak also reported that discussions are beginning with attorneys about updating the village charter, which was last amended in 1987.

The council approved payment of an invoice from Truck & Trailer Specialties for new cutting edges and hardware for the large snow plow and hardware, totaling \$715.02.

Also approved was payment for a sewer bill of \$1200 for flushing of the iron filtration plant. Both Peak and Garwood expressed shock at the amount of the bill and Trustee Van Hulle noted it was planned to discuss the amount with Ontwa Township. Garwood, who made the motion to pay the bill, included that the amount of the bill must be reported to the council each month.

See MEMBER, Page A8



A FIGHT TO THE END

Notre Dame football team falls to Ohio State in National Championship Game
For more coverage, see B1



Niles suspect in 2022 fatal shooting released from jail

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — The suspect in a 2022 Niles homicide has been released from jail after a year incarcerated after the charges were dismissed against him.

Farries Deshawn Maxwell, Jr., 18, of Niles, had been scheduled to go on trial last week in Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles court-

house. He had been charged with first-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Maxwell was accused of murder in the second of the three sets of murders occurring in Niles in August-September of 2022. Maxwell is accused of killing Raquon Glenn, the man who police believe killed Maxwell’s father in the first of murders.

Glenn was shot and killed

Sept. 8, 2022 in the 300 block of North Sixth Street near downtown Niles. Glenn was inside his vehicle when he was hit by multiple shots. Glenn was transported to the hospital and died a short time later. An autopsy found that he had three gunshot wounds.

According to the police report, no witnesses initially came forward in the investigation. Police were contacted in late September, 2022 by Maxwell’s girlfriend that she had

dropped him off that day in the area where Glenn was shot and later picked him up in Niles.

She said Maxwell had told her that he believed Glenn was responsible for Maxwell’s father’s death. Farries Maxwell, Sr., was shot and killed Aug. 16, 2022 in the same area of Niles. She said the younger Maxwell told her “I shot the dude” when she picked him up in Niles.

Berrien County Prosecutor Amy Byrd said this

week that the charges were dismissed after Assistant Prosecutor Jerry Vigansky had concerns about a couple of the witnesses scheduled to testify against Maxwell. The charges were dismissed without prejudice so they can be refiled in the future if more information and witnesses are found.

She noted cases are often dependent on the testimony of witnesses and their willingness to come forward.

“While our dedicated law enforcement officers are

See SUSPECT, Page A8

OBITUARIES

- Christine Albert

Myrtice Allison

Betty Speck

Charles Sandusky

Barbara Herman

Diane Dreher

Emelia “Millie” Wilds

Sandra Gatties
- William “Jay” Elliott

Stella M. Peterson

Isom Stanford

Mary Lou Waldrop

Mytrice A. Allison

Robert E. Cook

Charlotte Sotnyk

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS



Edwardsburg, Niles hoops battle in Little Warrior Big Heart contests



FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call Frankly at (269) 687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

Too bad for the Lions. I really can't believe we couldn't pull it off this year.

Tariffs are poison to businesses. Do we seriously think other countries will simply lay down and pay extra taxes to the US government without raising their taxes on the US?

I wish the US well, but we need friends around the world. We cannot afford to hurt the countries that have helped support ours over the years.

This cold temperature is dangerous. Please make sure our seniors are not venturing out to the garbage cans and bird feeders. One slip and fall could be lethal in this extreme cold.

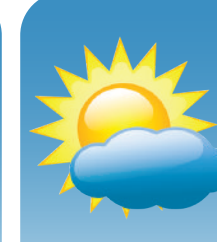
The Hunter Ice Festival was magnificent. It was so much fun and the cold was no problem. Everyone had a great time. Well done Niles!

Who tests for carbon monoxide in our area?

I followed two cars this week that had drivers totally turned around on the new interchange at US 12 and 51. It is going to cause more accidents.

President Trump gave a wonderful inauguration speech. It was a wonderful day for our great nation.

It's time for our nation to come together and unite for each other, not one man. We all share in the political-comeback of all time.

WEATHER					
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
					
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
33° 22°	26° 18°	36° 27°	27° 20°	33° 20°	28° 20°

WINTER WONDERS

Annual Hunter Ice Festival draws thousands

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Hunter Ice Festival took over downtown Niles this past weekend, much to the delight of those in attendance.

The 21st annual event featured dozens of expertly carved ice sculptures from prominent artists placed around the downtown for people to view.

Guests flocked toward festival favorites like the Fire and Ice, the Frigid 5K Run, the Speed Carving Show, Ice Fights, the Interactive Family Fun Ice Park and Ice Hill Slide and the return of Hunter Ice Cream. According to On Base Productions owner and Niles DDA Main Street member Charles Nelson, more than 20,000 people attended the festivities for some frozen fun.

See WINTER, Page A8



MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Did You Know...

Using protective devices like alarm systems, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and dead bolt locks could get you a discount on homeowner's insurance?

Call today to find out more!
(269) 683-4900

Business • Home
Auto • Life • Farm



INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SERVICE



LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

214 N. 4th St., Niles
www.imsinsuranceagency.com
(269) 683-4900



THE CHIEFTAIN HEART

HELPFUL
ENGAGED
ACHIEVEMENT
RESPONSIBILITY
TEAMWORK



DOWAGIAC UNION SCHOOLS

BUILDING ON A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

(269) 782-4400
DOWAGIACSCHOOLS.ORG



Looking for a new pharmacy?
We make transfers easy!

MAKE CASSOPOLIS FAMILY CLINIC NETWORK
YOUR HEALTHCARE HOME.



Our Family. Caring For Yours.
www.cassfamilyclinic.org

 Visit us on social media and on our website for updates and more information
Cassopolis Family Clinic Network is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Economic study finds SMC generates over \$58 Million per year for Cass County

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Southwestern Michigan College shared a comprehensive study today that confirms the college is a major economic engine for Cass County. With 331 employees and an annual expenditure for goods and services of \$19.8 million, SMC generates significant positive impact for taxpayers.

SMC’s clout in Cass County alone is estimated at \$58.4 million per year, or enough to support 1,017 jobs. That includes \$40.2 million in alumni impact, \$17.7 million spent on current operations and student spending of \$519,600.

An independent study conducted during the summer of 2024 by industry leader Lightcast analyzed data from the 2022-23 fiscal year. It found the college benefits regional businesses by increasing consumer spending while feeding a steady flow of qualified, trained workers into the labor force, increasing the productivity of the firms who hire them.

“We know the hard work of our faculty and staff has helped so many students

“What we do is so much more than just workforce training, and it’s important to quantify just how big of an economic engine Southwestern Michigan College is for Cass County and the region.”

— President Joe Odenwald

chart their course to better lives,” said President Joe Odenwald. “What we do is so much more than just workforce training, and it’s important to quantify just how big of an economic engine Southwestern Michigan College is for Cass County and the region.”

Lightcast’s two-pronged analysis combines economic and investment impacts. SMC, which celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024, enriches students’ lives by lifting their lifetime earnings and helping them realize their individual potential by learning skills, networking with professionals, building self-confidence and landing higher-paying jobs.

The study shows that students in the 2022-23 cohort will see a return of \$5.28 for every dollar they invest in

their education at SMC and will earn \$65.3 million more in earnings over their working lives.

That translates to an annual return on their SMC investment of 18.11 percent, quite favorable when compared to the stock market’s 30-year average annual return of 10.1 percent.

Going beyond just its taxing district, the college also benefits state taxpayers through increased revenues coupled with a reduced demand for government-supported social services.

For the full seven-county service area of Cass, Berrien, Van Buren, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph counties in Michigan and St. Joseph and Elkhart counties in Indiana, SMC’s annual impact swells to over \$224.1 million, enough to support 2,955

jobs, as alumni are more likely to reside in that larger region, bringing their higher incomes and business productivity to businesses there, the study shows.

Overall, Cass County taxpayers furnished SMC with \$15.0 million in 2022-23. They benefit in the amount of \$22.0 million through added tax revenue and public-sector savings. A reduced demand for government services translates into another \$2.2 million benefiting taxpayers.

For every dollar of public money invested in SMC, taxpayers receive \$1.61 in return over the course of students’ working lives.

State support of SMC amounted to \$32.2 million. Michigan’s economy is projected to grow by \$267.4 million during students’ working lives, with society benefiting from another \$7.01 million of public and private-sector savings. For every dollar invested in SMC, the state reaps \$8.53.

Those interested in reviewing the study’s full results can do so at swmich.edu/community/public-information/economic-impact/



Choose The Leader In:

- Fuel Oil Delivery for Home
- Agriculture & Commercial Fuels
- Service Station & Convenience Store Resalers
- Pacific Pride 24 Hour Commercial
- Fuel Locations in Cassopolis, Byron Center & Owosso



Contract/Fixed Price Options

- Volume Discounts
- Motor oils & hydraulics in bulk & packaged quantities
- Premium Diesel Fuel
- Hoses & Filters in stock

QUALITY PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTORS

J&H Oil is your DEF Solution for Diesel Engines as Required on 2010 or Newer Vehicles. Available in 2.5 gallon, 55 gallon and Totes





Quality Petroleum Distributors
604 Water Street, Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-2441 • (800) 424-3885 | WWW.JHOIL.COM



Get Fit, Stay Fit

The Cass County COA has outstanding fitness centers at both locations. Each center offers a variety of cardiovascular fitness machines and weight training equipment as well as In-Person and Zoom Fitness Classes. Trained instructors provide assistance, advice and class instruction to help you meet your fitness goals.

- Balance, Stretch & Stability • Cardio Challenge
- H.I.L.I.T. • S.E.A.T. • Tai Chi • Yoga



Enhancing Life

Lowe Center
60525 Decatur Rd.
Cassopolis, MI 49031

(800) 323-0390 | (269) 445-8110
www.CassCOA.org
facebook.com/CassCOA

Front Street Crossing
227 S. Front Street
Dowagiac, MI 49047

PET OF THE WEEK



Daisy, a tuxedo kitten, is described by volunteers as energetic and outgoing. They say Daisy loves to explore her surroundings and play with toys. She adores attention and is always ready for a cuddle session. Daisy is eager to find a forever family who will cherish her playful spirit and give her the love and affection she deserves. Daisy is current on shots, FeLV-FIV negative and set for spay. Reach out to Paws of Hope at adoptions@pawsofhope.org about delightful Daisy.



POKAGON AUTOMOTIVE

- Oil Changes
- Tire Service
- Brakes
- Auto Inspection
- Tune Ups
- Fleet Repair
- Suspension Work
- Batteries
- Used Tires



*see us for details

60857 M-51, Dowagiac, MI 49047
(574) 339-9205
Next to Mantke’s Mini Mart



BIBLE TRUTHS

Join us in the exciting world of Bible Truths. Learn from the bible how we got here? Did the New Testament take the place of the Old Testament? Can a nice person get to heaven? If we give a lot of our time to doing good for others will that get us to heaven? Does God cause bad things to happen to us in our life? Do we really have a guardian Angel? Do we go to Heaven of Hell when we die? What does the 4th commandment mean? Why is Sunday the day of the worship? Why does it matter what day we worship on. Do people who give a lot to the church get priority in going to heaven? Is Jesus ever coming back? These are just a few of the exciting subjects we are going to cover in our series of

Bible Truths: Reserve a spot today by emailing Carlson7071@att.net Study starts on Feb 3, 2025 at the Niles Senior Center at 1109 Bell Rd Niles, Michigan



Opinion

Anxiety is more common than you think

Anxiety is something many people experience at different levels and at various times in their lives. It often appears at the most inconvenient moments, making even simple tasks feel overwhelming. When I experience anxiety, I know it's important to step away and find a quiet, solitary place. I take deep breaths, focus on relaxing my muscles, and try to clear my mind as much as possible—even



Turnock

though intrusive thoughts often sneak in. Instrumental music is another tool I use to help my mind relax, or I might turn to a full-body relaxation video on YouTube. Anxiety is a challenge for many people, but discovering ways to calm yourself can make a significant

difference. Not only does it ease mental tension, but it can also have physical benefits, such as lowering blood pressure. According to Forbes, about 19.1% of Americans deal with anxiety daily. To help manage my own, I start each morning by sitting quietly, closing

my eyes, and taking deep breaths. There are countless strategies to keep anxiety at bay, and one of the most effective—if accessible—is therapy. Processing past experiences, emotions, and even current stressors can significantly reduce anxiety. Ultimately, finding

what soothes and calms both your mind and body is key to managing anxiety effectively. Peace and love to you all. *Joshua Turnock is a Niles High School graduate and a valued member of Leader Publications' Design Team.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Medicare Advantage needs protection in Michigan

As we enter Medicare's annual enrollment period, Michigan's 1.2 million Medicare Advantage beneficiaries face crucial healthcare decisions amid rising costs for basic necessities. Medicare Advantage has proven itself an invaluable program, providing comprehensive, affordable coverage that saves beneficiaries an average of \$2,541 annually compared to traditional Fee-For-Service Medicare. The program's streamlined "all-in-one" approach eliminates the need for supplemental coverage while extending vital benefits to our most vulnerable populations. Over 58% of Michigan's Medicare recipients now rely on Medicare Advantage plans, in-

cluding significant numbers of low-income seniors and minorities who might otherwise struggle to access quality healthcare. However, proposed policy changes in Washington threaten to undermine these benefits. These modifications could result in reduced supplemental benefits, fewer choices, and higher costs for seniors and people with disabilities who can least afford them. For Michigan, where Medicare Advantage serves as a healthcare lifeline for so many, the stakes are particularly high. Services like dental and vision are crucial in terms of overall health and quality of life, yet those supplements are at risk. A focus on cutting costs and more

narrow provider networks could heavily affect the quality of care coordination for those who need it most. The possible decrease in the number of Medicare Advantage plans, or the reduced benefits of a specific plan, would force beneficiaries to switch, putting their established care at risk. It could have a devastating effect on an individual's covered treatment and covered providers. Speaking from experience, having to switch plans has the potential to delay necessary treatment. Even when access to the provider and treatment do not change with a new plan, there are still a series of steps that must be taken in order for the

new plan to cover it. In my particular case, the established treatment was postponed in order to schedule with a specific provider who would fill out the necessary paperwork to submit to the new insurance company so that the treatment I hoped to continue could be approved. At this appointment, over a month after I was due for the procedure, I was able to reschedule for it. For a treatment I received every other month, I ended up waiting nine. Moral of that story, a minor change meant I could do less and I hurt more for the better part of a year, while I tried to catch up to my "normal" level of pain and functionality. We are not discussing numbers on a piece of paper. These

are not minor details with no real consequence. The policies in question are a substantial threat to the quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities, and we need help fighting. Our congressional delegation, including Senator Gary Peters, has historically championed healthcare accessibility. Now, they must actively oppose policies that would increase seniors' healthcare costs and defend Medicare Advantage's vital role in our healthcare system. Michigan's seniors and disabled deserve nothing less than their full support in preserving this essential program. *Sarah Crofoot Benton Harbor*

NEWS

Notre Dame to celebrate 10th annual Walk the Walk Week

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — The University of Notre Dame's 10th annual Walk the Walk Week, planned each year around Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will take place Monday, Jan. 27 through Saturday, Feb. 1. The week will feature a series of events, exhibits and discussions designed to invite members of the Notre Dame community to reflect — both individually and collectively — on how they can take an active role in making the University more welcoming and participate in building the Beloved Community at Notre Dame and beyond. The week's events will begin with an annual Candlelight Prayer Service at 7 p.m. Monday in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, with University President Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., presiding. The service, which is open to the public and will be livestreamed, will feature a keynote reflection from 2024 Latetare Medalist Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, chief executive officer of Feeding America. Babineaux-Fontenot, a leader and advocate dedicated to combating hunger and strengthening communities, has led Feeding America — now the nation's largest charity — since 2018. She previously served on Walmart's leadership team, most recently as executive vice president and global treasurer. The prayer service will be followed by a



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America.

candlelight march to the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue and a dessert reception in the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the LaFortune Student Center. A campus-wide donation drive is also part of this year's Walk the Walk Week. Notre Dame faculty, staff and students are encouraged to donate new supplies including personal hygiene items, diapers, socks, and winter hats and gloves to support individuals in the South Bend community facing hardship and housing insecurity. Dropboxes have been placed around campus, and donations will be accepted until Tuesday. On Feb. 1 (Saturday), all students — undergraduate and graduate — are invited to gather in Duncan Student Center to sort the donations and package care kits for four local organizations: The Center for the Homeless, Hope Ministries, Our Lady of the Road and St. Margaret's House. This initiative is co-sponsored by Notre Dame Student Government, the Office of Public Affairs and Communications, and Procurement Services, in partnership with the Office of the President. The week will include more than 20 additional campus events sponsored by various University departments and student organizations. A full list is available at walkthewalk.nd.edu.

Berrien County Health Department offers safety tips for winter weather

COMMUNITY REPORT

BENTON HARBOR — As winter settles in and brings extreme temperatures and heavy snowfall to our area, the Berrien County Health Department is providing safety tips to community members. It's important to winterize homes and vehicles since there is a higher risk of car crashes, hypothermia, frostbite and carbon monoxide poisoning during the winter months, according to Ready.gov. "We encourage community members to prioritize preparing their home and vehicle for winter weather since conditions can change rapidly," BCHD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Jeff Thornton said. "Spending a few moments developing a plan and making an emergency kit can help keep you and your loved ones safe when it's cold, snowy and icy out." **BCHD OFFERS THE FOLLOWING TIPS:** **General safety tips:** • Keep your phone charged. • Stay aware of weather forecasts via news reports and available weather apps for your smartphone. • Learn the locations of local community warming shelters in case you lose power. • Create an emergency kit and include the following items: • Over-the-counter medication and any prescribed medication. • Three-day supply of nonperish-

able food per person that can be prepared without a stove or microwave. • Three gallons of water per person. • First-aid kit that includes bandages, gauze, antiseptic (wipes or bottled) adhesive tape, hot/cold compresses, burn cream and triangle bandages for slings or splints. • Flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries. • Whistle to signal for help. • Warm clothes and bedding like a sleeping bag or blankets. • Pet supplies such as food, medication, etc. • List of family emergency contact information and medication. Community members also are encouraged to register for the Berrien County Office of Emergency Management's B-WARN! Emergency alert service that provides voice or text notifications. It's also recommended residents download the FEMA App, which provides severe weather alerts for specific cities or ZIP codes and is available for iOS and Android users.

Winterizing your home: • Insulate windows and doors to conserve heat. • Leave one faucet dripping to prevent pipes from freezing. • Open cabinet doors in your

See TIPS, Page A8

Niles Daily Star

ADMINISTRATIVE PUBLISHER
Rich Cains
(219) 455-2349
rich.cains@leaderpub.com

ACCOUNTING MANAGER
Rhonda Rauen
rhonda.rauen@leaderpub.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE & DISTRIBUTION
Amy Glover
(269)687-7717
amy.glover@leaderpub.com

EDITORIAL MANAGING EDITOR
Maxwell Harden
231-750-5776
max.harden@leaderpub.com

ADVERTISING
Dennis Hinsey
(269) 362-1525
dennis.hinsey@leaderpub.com

DESIGN CENTER MANAGER
Allison Dale
allison.dale@leaderpub.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Joshua Turnock
Caitlin Schlemmer

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
(269) 591-6105

© 2025 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication for UFS

THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL!!!

PENGUIN ISLAND

BOING!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

DEATH NOTICES

Christine Albert, 64, of Niles, passed away Thursday, January 16, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Myrtice Allison, 92, of Vandalia, died Sunday, January 19, 2025. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis.

Betty Speck, 89, of Elkhart, passed away Monday, January 20, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Charles Sandusky, 73, of Berrien Springs, passed away on January 20, 2025. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Barbara Herman, 74, of Buchanan, died Sunday, January 19, 2025. Hoven Funeral Home, Buchanan, MI.

OBITUARIES



Diane Dreher
August 21, 1967 - January 14, 2025

Diane Kaye Dreher went to be with Jesus on January 14, 2025, at the age of 57, after an extended battle with cancer. She was surrounded by her family as she passed from this world to the next. She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend.

Diane was born on August 21, 1967, in Niles, Michigan, to Edward Manley Curtis and Ardelle Kaye Brown. On July 25, 1987, Diane married Gary Dreher. He survives.

Diane loved to help others and make people smile. She consistently put others' needs before her own, especially when it came to her family. She will be remembered for being the person who could bring light to any situation. Above all else, she will always be remembered for being an amazing wife, mother, and grandmother. She was the definition of selflessness and leaves behind many who loved and cherished her. Diane is survived by her husband, Gary Dreher; children, Sarah (Jon) Workman and Paul (Skylar) Dreher; six grandchildren, Edward, Jon, Joseph, and Elizabeth Workman, and Lucy and Penelope Dreher.

Visitation will be Thursday, January 23, from 6:00-8:00 PM at Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 E Main Street, Niles, Michigan 49120. The Funeral Mass will follow on Friday, January 24, at 11:00 AM at St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 219 S State St, Niles, Michigan 49120.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, 615 East Main Street Niles. Please leave a condolence on HalbritterWickens.com

To order memorial trees or send flowers to the family in memory of Diane Kaye Dreher, please visit our flower store.

Emelia "Millie" Wilds

August 6, 1923 - January 9, 2025

Emelia Blake "Millie" Wilds, 1, of Dowagiac, passed away peacefully Thursday, January 9, 2025, in the comfort of her mama's arms and her



with her dada by her side. Her life began August 6, 2023, in Kalamazoo, Michigan born to Austin Wilds and Elissa Roberts. Millie was the light of her parent's lives. She loved Moana, zoos, aquariums, fireworks, the beach, and lights. She was a happy girl that loved to smile and laugh. She touched so many lives of her family, friends, and even brought together the community and county.

Millie will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her parents Austin Wilds and Elissa Roberts, both of Dowagiac; her grandparents, Bonnie Swan, Brandi Wilds, both of Dowagiac, Larry Roberts, Jr., of Niles, Roscoe Wilds of Lorain, Ohio, Bobby McCarthy of Dowagiac; her great grandparents, Larry Roberts, Sr., Judy (Ronald) Rodriguez, Chuck McCarthy, all of Dowagiac, Joanne (Ron) Delbridge of Oscoda; great great grandmother, Carolyn Williamson of Dowagiac; aunts, Danyell Roberts, Tonya Roberts, Grace McCarthy, Isabell McCarthy, all of Dowagiac, Alaina Roberts of Niles; uncles, Easton Roberts of Niles, Ayden Wilds, Ashton Wilds, both of Dowagiac; and a host of cousins.

She was preceded in death by her great grandmothers, Bonnie McCarthy, Cathy Jackson, Beverly Wilds; her great grandfather, Barry Swan; her great great grandmothers, Sarah Roberts, Bonnie and Herb Whitbey; and great aunt, Tonya Swan.

The family will observe a private remembrance. The family would like to thank the Bronson Pediatric Hematology and Oncology for their compassion and care for Millie. They basically helped raise her and were a great support.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Millie be made to the EliStrong Foundation, Post Office Box 754, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047, or Cass County Toys for Tots, 22385 Happy Drive, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, or DC Strong, 102 North Street C, Plainwell, Michigan 49080, or Cancer Families United, 245 Colrain Street Southwest, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49548, or The Rainbow Connection, 621 West University Drive,

Rochester, Michigan 48307. Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.



Sandra Gatties
February 11, 1955 - January 18, 2025

Sandra Kay Gatties, age 69, beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away after her eight year-long battle with cancer on January 18, 2025, at her home in Dowagiac, Michigan, surrounded by her loving family.

Sandy was born in Watervliet, Michigan, on February 11, 1955, to Robert and Mary Maddox. She found her purpose in her Christian faith and taking care of her family. She met her best friend Nancy Walker (Larry) in 2nd Grade and the love of her life, Robert Gatties, when she was 17 years old. Sandy and Rob celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2023 by renewing their vows alongside Nancy and Larry.

Sandy will always be remembered for her kindness to everyone she ever met. She loved her pet bird, Tango, and made the best chocolate chip cookies.

Sandy is survived by her husband - Rob; three children - Jason Gatties (Priscilla), Chris Gatties (Jeannene) and Brandon Gatties; four grandchildren - Dylan (Alicia), Alora, Audra and Sinoia; and three great-grandchildren - Caylan, Ayden and Beckham.

Sandy was a citizen of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, and the family would like to thank the Pokagon Band Elders and Health Services, especially her provider, Michelle, for the support and care she received from them. They would also like to thank the hospice caring circle team, Mollie, Nicole and Shonda.

A service to celebrate Sandy's life will be held at 1:00 PM on Friday, January 24, at Clark Chapel - Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St, Dowagiac, where friends may visit with her family from 12:00 pm until the time of service. Private family interment will be in Mission Hills

Memorial Gardens, Niles. Please visit Sandy's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave condolences to her family at www.clarkch.com.



William "Jay" Elliott

March 4, 1947 - January 15, 2025

William "Jay" Elliott, 77, a lifelong resident of Dowagiac, passed away on Wednesday morning, January 15, 2025, at Rose Arbor Hospice in Kalamazoo, MI.

Jay was born on March 4, 1947, in Dowagiac, MI to the late William and Alice (King) Elliott.

Jay, as many knew him, was an honorary member of the Dowagiac Fire Dept for 55 years. He also helped with the gates at home football games. When not doing this, Jay could be seen walking through town visiting local businesses, or at home tending to his cat. He also enjoyed spending time with his best friends Bobby and Lupe Nelson who were always there to help him when he needed it.

Jay is survived by two sisters - Arlene D. Keys of Dowagiac, and Rita K Quijas of Niles; nieces and nephews - Sally and Daine Keys, Charles, Jake, Priscilla and April Hatfield, Bruce Stillwell and Leon Quijas.

Jay is preceded in death by his parents - three sisters - Sue Hatfield, Norma Elliott and Theresa Elliott; brothers-in-law - James A Keys Sr and nephew - James "Jimmy" Keys Jr.

A service to celebrate Jays' life will be held at 12:00 pm Saturday, February 8, at Clark Chapel - Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St, Dowagiac, where friends may visit with his family from 11:00 am until the time of service. Inurnment will follow in Riverside Cemetery. Please visit Jay's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave a condolence to his family at www.clarkch.com.



Stella M. Peterson

November 12, 1944 - January 12, 2025

Stella M. Peterson, 80, of Vandalia, died peacefully Sunday, January 12, 2025, in the comfort of her family's presence.

Her life began November 12, 1944 in Detroit, Michigan, one of four children born to Raymond and Lillie McIntosh. She met James Ronald Neal, Sr. and they had three children together, Stephanie Neal, Raymon "Monna" Neal, James Ronald Neal, Jr. She married Lucius Charles Peterson November 13, 2011 in Cassopolis, Michigan. He preceded her in death July 23, 2012. In 2019, Stella (his Booboo) and Franklin Williams became special friends.

Stella was a faithful woman who was proud to know the Bible back and forth. She praised her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ until the end. She was passionate about fishing. She enjoyed watching her stories and was proud to have earned her GED in Lansing, Michigan. She cherished visiting Elberton, Georgia to spend time with her family. She was a mother, grandmother, and blessing to many.

Stella will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by daughter, Raymon "Monna" Neal of Vandalia; son, James Ronald Neal, Jr. of Vandalia; five grandchildren, Stellana McBride of Lansing, DeAndre Neal-McIntosh of Vandalia, Timothy Black, Jr. of Dearborn, Tiffany Neal of Lansing, Reneathia Neal of Kalamazoo; seven great grandchildren; many other children and grandchildren; sister, Mattie Lee Hill of Elberton, Georgia, Georgia Yarborough of Vandalia; and a host of nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her beloved husband, Lucius Peterson; daughter, Stephanie Neal; grandson, Malik Ballard; sister, Fannie Mae Hall; and the father of her children, James Ronald, Sr.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. until time of service at 12:00 noon in the Church of Cassopolis, 520 Pearl Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031.

Ms. Peterson will be laid to rest beside her grandson, Malik Ballard, in Bogue Street Memorial Garden, Vandalia.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Stella be made to BEATDAODDS, 16704 15 Mile Road, Fraser, Michigan 48026 or to the American Cancer Society, Post Office Box 6704, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

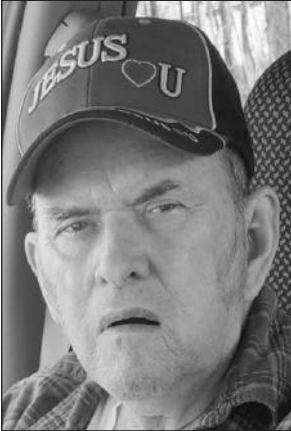
Isom Stanford

October 5, 1947 - January 17, 2025

Isom Stanford, 77, of Vandalia, died Friday, January 17, 2025, in the comfort of his family's presence.

His life began October 5, 1947 in Lepanto, Arkansas, one of seven children born to Bud and Ollie Stanford. He married Wanda Lanell Golden May 30, 1969 in Arkansas.

Isom cherished his family and they always came first. He was a very



loving, caring husband, father, and grandfather. His favorite hobbies were fishing and cooking. He enjoyed food and his family will dearly miss his homemade chili. He loved to tell jokes and make people laugh. He would get so tickled at his own jokes, he would wind up laughing so hard, that they ended laughing at him. His puppy, Peaches, was his pride and joy.

Isom will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his wife of fifty-five years, Wanda L. Stanford of Vandalia; two daughters, Brenda Stanford of Standish, Angela (Todd) Stanford-Jamison of Cassopolis; one son, Isom E. (Ashley) Stanford of Cassopolis; grandchildren, Larissa Jamison, Malik Jamison, Avaughn Jamison, Daishean Jamison, Tyeson Stanford, Tyelurson Stanford, Lorelei Stanford, Kimberly Stanford, all of Cassopolis, Braxton Dodson of Three Rivers, Brianna Stanford, Wanda R. Stanford, both of Standish; two great grandchildren; one sister, Lilly May of Arkansas; his beloved puppy, Peaches; and a host of nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and five siblings.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, January 25, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. in Redemption Church, 9134 Black Lake Road, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111.

Isom will be laid to rest in Mission Hills Memorial Gardens.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Isom be made to Redemption Church, 9134 Black Lake Road, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Mary Lou Waldrop

January 14, 1935 - January 19, 2025

Mary Lou Waldrop, 90, passed away on Sunday, January 19, 2025, in Niles, Michigan, surrounded by her family.

Mary was born on January 14, 1935 in Niles, Michigan, to the late Paul Frank Haas and Dorothy (Carter) Haas.

Along with her parents, Mary was preceded in death by her brother, Art Haas.

Left to cherish the memory of Mary is her loving husband of 71 years, Charles Henry Waldrop; sons, Brent (Penny) Waldrop and Brian Waldrop; two grandchildren, Amy (Mark) Shively and Kristina (Tony) Closson; four great grandchildren,

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

R	I	P		S	H	E	D	S		A	C	T
A	R	E		T	A	R	O	T		C	U	E
N	O	R		E	R	A	S	E		E	R	N
I	N	S	E	A	M		E	V	E	R	S	O
			U	R	L				E	M	B	E
A	J	A	R		T	W	I	N	S			
L	A	D	S		O	A	F			B	I	B
E	Y	E			O	F	F			G	O	R
			S	A	L	T	T			O	U	S
S	A	L	A	D					B	A	N	
C	L	I	C	H	E				C	O	D	D
R	I	B		E	D	G	A	R		A	I	L
A	C	E			R	E	E	S	E		R	A
M	E	L			E	N	T	E	R		Y	R

SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

9	3	8	5	4	7	2	1	6
2	4	7	9	1	6	8	5	3
1	5	6	3	2	8	7	4	9
5	8	1	2	7	3	6	9	4
3	2	9	1	6	4	5	7	8
7	6	4	8	5	9	3	2	1
8	9	2	7	3	1	4	6	5
6	1	5	4	8	2	9	3	7
4	7	3	6	9	5	1	8	2

Area man gets jail time for drug possession

By **DEBRA HAIGHT**
Leader Publications Contributor

CASSOPOLIS — One year county jail sentences were handed down to two area residents Friday, Jan. 17 in Cass County Circuit Court. Three other people received probation sentences.

Dennis Wills Henslee, 45, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine as a habitual offender and was sentenced to 365 days in jail with credit for 100 days served. He must also pay \$2,048 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred July 29 in Wayne Township outside of Dowagiac. Police were called after he was found yelling outside of a home and they found meth on him when he was arrested.

Defense attorney Greg Feldman noted that Henslee was celebrating getting out of prison when he was arrested. Since then, he said Henslee has had a health scare with an ear infection.

“Since my medical diagnosis,



Henslee

I started to re-evaluate what’s important in my life,” Henslee said. “I’m changing my people, places and things. I want to put this behind me so I can have a better future ... I thought I had all the time in the world to change and I realized I don’t.”

Cass Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman pointed out that this is Henslee’s 12th felony conviction, the ninth for meth. “You’ve thrown away seven years of your life, five of them in prison and the other two in jail,” he said.

“Does it make sense to waste your life on meth?” he asked. “It doesn’t look like meth is a good time at all, it’s hard time and that’s where it leads. You’re old enough and experienced enough to realize that it’s either meth and incarceration or not, over and over. But for this agreement, it’s going to be prison over and over and over. It’s not rocket science.”

“I’m putting you, your attorney and the prosecutor on notice,” the judge said. “If you’re ever before me again for possession of meth, don’t even try to negotiate a county jail sentence, I won’t accept it. Change your ways or understand my position. Either get it under

control or go to prison.”

Christopher Neal Myers, 43, of Constantine, pleaded guilty to second-degree home invasion and resisting and obstructing police and was sentenced to 365 days in jail with credit for 231 days already served. He must pay \$2,116 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred June 1, 2024 in Porter Township near Jones. Police were dispatched to calls of a breaking and entering in progress and found Myers hiding behind a table. They found two backpacks filled with stolen items and a meth pipe. He told police he broke in to steal woodworking tools to make something for a family party.

“I assume that it’s dawned on you that if you weren’t using meth, you could be employed and afford your own woodworking tools,” the judge said. “This is the fifth conviction for breaking in and theft, you need to find another line of work, you’re not good at it ... You need to grow up, cut the meth or the next time I see you, you will be going to prison.”



Myers

An Edwardsburg woman just recently off parole was sentenced to probation.

Jane Hawley, 40, of North Shore Drive in Edwardsburg, pleaded guilty to second degree home invasion and possession of methamphetamine-both as a habitual offender and was sentenced to three years probation, credit for 231 days served, completion of the Twin County Probation Program in the Swift & Sure program and \$2,696 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred June 1 in Edwardsburg when Hawley and another person broke into a home. They were discovered after a surveillance camera caught their actions and police were able to track them down.

Assistant Prosecutor Jason Ronning noted that Hawley had 10 prior felonies including two home invasion charges and a criminal enterprise charge. “She was also discharged from parole only two months before this incident,” he said.

Feldman noted that Hawley had never been assessed for a drug treatment program in



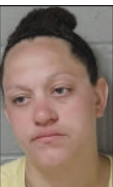
Hawley

the past. “This is a generational thing with her parents and her children,” he said. “She wants to change the trajectory. This program is something that can save her life going forward, to keeper from going to prison again.”

Judge Herman warned Hawley that she needs to take the program seriously. “If you enter into the program and violate, the reality will be a sentence in the midpoint or upper end of the guidelines, with as much as 10 years in prison,” he said. “... This is do or die for you.”

“You have completed treatment in the past and now you’re looking at another 10 years in prison for meth if you violate your probation,” he added. “Is it really that damn good? Have you seen anyone’s life get better with meth? Why would you do it? You want to do something with your life, why throw it all away for meth?”

Vanessa Nicole Perez, 29, of Marcellus, pleaded guilty to possession of analogues and was sentenced



Perez

See JAIL, Page A8

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A6

Jillian Shively, Joseph Shively, Hannah Closson, and Olivia Closson; and sisters, Pat (Don) Knox and Dorothy (Roy) Price.

Mary was a vibrant soul with a passion for business. She and her husband together owned East End Campers in Niles from 1956 to 1978. She later became a realtor and served her community for many years after.

Her true passion was her family. She found no greater joy than being surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Her laughter was contagious, her presence comforting, and her morals spoke of her Christianity.

Mary’s legacy is one of love and unwavering determination. She believed there wasn’t anything that couldn’t be accomplished without hard work and the support from her family. She lived her life fully, with grace, leaving behind memories that will forever be treasured by those whom she loved.

In keeping with Mary’s wishes, there will be no services held at this time.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home.

Photos, condolences, and memories may be left for Mary’s family at www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com



Mytrice A. Allison
September 29, 1932 - January 19, 2025

Myrtice Ann "Myrt" Allison, 92, of Vandalia, died Sunday, January 19, 2025 in her home, surrounded by family.

Her life began September 29, 1932 in Chicago, Illinois the one of five children born to Fred and May Vierke. She married Orval Allison, Jr. February 18, 1956 in

Chicago, Illinois.

Myrt was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois and worked for Kodak. She and Orval moved to Donnell Lake the day following their wedding, where she lived for the rest of her life. She worked as a teller first, then as a bookkeeper for the superintendent of Cassopolis Public Schools. Myrt was an avid reader. She enjoyed needlework and taking care of her beloved dogs. She and Orval enjoyed extensive international travels and camping in the United States. She was a skilled cook and knew how to enjoy a glass of wine. For the most part, she was a quiet and private person.

Myrt will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her husband of sixty-eight years, Orval Allison Jr. of Vandalia; one daughter, Gretchen (John Pinto) Allison of Vandalia; three sons, Douglas (Mary Brown) Allison of Vandalia, Konrad (Tracy) Allison of Vandalia, Gary (Brenda) Allison of Niles; seven grandchildren, Nate (Courtney) Allison of Linden, Ashley Allison of Sumnerville, Cole Allison of Chicago, Illinois, Vincent (Sienna) Pinto of Kalamazoo, Marie (Sam Starck) Pinto of Chicago, Illinois, Julie Allison of Chicago, Illinois, Noah Allison of Denver, Colorado; three great grandchildren, Jayce, Addy, Saylor; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by parents and her siblings.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Myrt will be laid to rest in Birch Lake Cemetery.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Robert E. Cook
January 7, 1937 - January 15, 2025

Robert Ernest "Bob" Cook, 88, of Dowagiac died peacefully Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

His life began January 7, 1937, in Cloquet, Minnesota as a member of the Ojibwa Tribe, the older of two sons born to Wilbur and Olive Cook.

Bob was strong willed and stubborn at times,



but he also had an enormous heart and wonderful sense of humor. He was generous, loyal, and brave. Bob was clever and full to the brim with knowledge gained through all his life's experiences: master carpenter - he could fix or build anything - fisherman, hunter, explorer, lover of cars, and old-time music enthusiast. He also loved nature, especially birds, fish, trees, and lakes. Bob loved his cats, Magic, Nookaa, and Michaa. He was a proud member of the Ojibwa Tribe and enjoyed attending pow wows. Bob attended The Bridge Church in Dowagiac where everyone enjoyed spending time with him and where he volunteered many hours to help the church and support his friends there.

Bob was a giving, caring and selfless soul. He served honorably in the U.S. Army. Bob was a popular baseball coach for elementary school boys and girls and was a Boy Scout leader. He shared his passion for his craft through mentoring others and would do anything for anyone. Smart and a perfectionist, almost to a fault, Bob was very precise and would describe himself as occasionally being "stubborn."

If you knew Bob, you loved him. He will be remembered for all the heart he shared with his friends and family. Bob loved spending time with Cheryl Pilaske, whom he cherished. They would spend time with family and friends, attending concerts, trying different cuisines, dancing and simply enjoying life together.

Bob will be dearly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Rhonda Silcox; his loving companion, Cheryl Pilaske; six children, Robert Licari, Julie Hicks, Cindy Cook, Lori Cook, Matthew Runs-With-No-Surname,

Shawn Hale; several grandchildren and great grandchildren; one sister, Pam Cook; three brothers, Lance Cook, Keith Cook, Paul Cook; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Michael Cook; and one brother, Gordon Cook.

The family will observe a private remembrance.

Bob will be returned to the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa in Nett Lake, Minnesota.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.



Charlotte Sotnyk
December 5, 1940 - January 22, 2025

Charlotte Marie Sotnyk, 84, of Sister Lakes, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 22, 2025 in St. Joseph.

The family will receive guests from 12:30pm until time of funeral service at 2pm, Sunday, January 26, 2025 at Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, 66325 M-152, Dowagiac. Interment to follow at Keeler Cemetery in Keeler. Memorial contributions may be given to Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church. Those wishing to leave an online condolence for the family may do so at www.clarkch.com.

Charlotte was born December 5, 1940 in Elgin, IL to Leslie Bates and Evelyn (Fleek) Granade. After losing her first husband over 40 years ago, Charlotte met and married Jerry Sotnyk on October 7, 1996 in Sister Lakes. Charlotte worked for many years in the banking industry for various banks in various roles. Her true drive, however, came from serving her Lord and church community; first at Faith Lutheran Church where she worked in the

library and taught art at the school. She has also been a proud and active member of Redeemer for many years. Charlotte enjoyed knitting, crocheting, and quilting in her free time. She made beautiful quilts to show her love for friends and family; you knew you were loved by Charlotte if you were in possession of at least one of her handmade quilts. She also enjoyed tending to her many gardens. Even well into her golden years, you

could often find her out independently tending to her yard with the ride-on mower!

Charlotte will be missed by her children, Charles (Connie) Wittorp, Melody (Mark) Wildeman, and April (Tom) Fox; 17 grandchildren; 21 great grandchildren; and her sister, Gladys (Bob) McClintok.

She is preceded in death her husband, Jerry Sotnyk; her siblings, Leslie Bates, Pat Ortiz, and Ron Bates; and her parents.

We'll be there when you need us most

Mission Hills
Memorial Chapel, Crematory & Gardens
- Since 1953 -
Niles • 269-683-8333 • MissionHillsMemorialCCG.com

Robert Clayton
PLASTERING & DRYWALL
30+ Years Experience

- Fast Dependable Service
- Clean Quality Work
- Finish and Repair
- Water Damage Specialist

269-695-7621
4060 W. Bertrand • Niles, MI

Wagner
FAMILY FUNERALS

burials • cremations
Only you can understand your loss...
...we care enough to try.

Connelly Chapel
Cassopolis
269.445.2435

Pobocik Chapel
Three Oaks
269.756.3831
wagnercares.com

Celebrate a life

CLARK CHAPEL
405 Center St, Dowagiac
269-471-2700
starksfamilyfh.com

Starks
Family Funeral Homes & Cremation Services

Ask Us About Our Pre-Need Plans

PAUL E. MAYHEW
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

26863 W. Main Street, Edwardsburg, MI
269-663-5345
Paul E. Mayhew, Owner

County dispatch center receives boost

By **DEBRA HAIGHT**
Leader Publications Contributor

ST. JOSEPH — The Berrien County 9-1-1 Center is getting a boost on two fronts.

Director Caitlin Sampsell told Berrien County Commissioners Thursday that the center received a free recruiting video from one of its vendors and is also working with an area school district to train students to be dispatchers.

Sampsell noted that staffing has been a concern for “quite some time”, both in Berrien County and nationwide. She said she saw an opportunity when one of the department’s vendors had a contest for a free recruitment video. She entered the contest and learned

later that Berrien County was selected to get a free video.

The video, part of which she showed during the meeting, featured interviews with three dispatchers, Berrien County Sheriff Chuck Heit and Buchanan Police Chief Harvey Burnett as well as Sampsell giving a tour of the department’s facilities.

“Our 9-1-1 team plays a vital role in helping us respond to calls,” Burnett said in the video. “It’s a very rewarding job but also very demanding. They make sure we get to incidents timely and also have the information we need to respond.”

Sampsell said dispatchers play two important roles, one to make sure the public gets the help they

need in emergencies and also to make sure first responders have the information they need to answer calls and also to get home safely. “Come join our team and make Berrien County a safer place to be,” she said in the video.

The video is expected to be shared on social media sites as part of the department’s effort to recruit new people. She told commissioners that there are currently five openings with one person going through training right now. She said dispatchers receive a total of nine months training.

Sampsell said the 9-1-1 Center is also partnering with the Berrien Springs Public Schools’ Career Technical Education program to include dispatching as part of

their law enforcement classes. That program and other career technical education programs are open to students from throughout the county.

She said she and her staff have a pilot program going at present to offer high school juniors and seniors the chance to learn about dispatching as a career. Students will be able to “job shadow” actual dispatchers as well as practice on simulators.

She noted that skills students are learning are “life skills” like mapping and typing that can help them in a variety of careers. “The cool thing is that 9-1-1 is everywhere and students can take these skills wherever they go,” she said.

“I know there’s a lot of excitement with the CTE program,” Commissioner Teri Freehling said. “I’ve sat in in some of the conversations with the person heading the program, it’s a great way to utilize resources and talents and make students aware of this career track for the future.”

Thursday’s meeting also featured formal approval of the application for federal funds needed to construction a connecting trail from the McCoy’s Creek Trail in Buchanan to the Indiana-Michigan River Valley Trail as it goes north from Niles. The grant is for \$4 million to pay for the construction of the trail along Walton Road from the River St. Joe Brewery to Winn Road.



Family is Why WE DO IT ALL

Call or visit for all of your insurance needs.

Office Hours:
Monday: 9 am to 6 pm
Tuesday & Thursday: 9 am to 5 pm
Wednesday & Friday: 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday by Appointment

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR  STATE FARM IS THERE®

StateFarm.com® • State Farm Insurance Companies
Home Offices: Bloomington, Illinois

Lorie Bowers, Agent
68935 Gateway Dr.
PO Box 623
Edwardsburg, MI
49112-0623
Bus: 269-663-7015
www.LorieBowers.com

Enjoy a lunch & a show in 2025!

2-26-25 - Good Morning Vietnam – Hits from 1955-1975
3-27-25 - Jersey Boys
4-24-25 - Church Basement Ladies
5-21-25 - Nunsense
9-18-25 - Heartbreak Hotel
11-19-25 - The Naughty List

Give us a call or see our website for more information.
269-684-2880
1-800-811-1528
www.signaltravel.com



MONUMENTS

By *Design* LLC

Cemetery Memorial Stones

21945 M60 East, Cassopolis, MI 49031
Phone: 269.445.3848 Fax: 269.445.3828
www.monumentsbydesignllc.com
monumentsbydesign@gmail.com



“Collision Repairs Are Our Business”
★Body and Frame Repair★
★Insurance Work Welcome★



Libby Christianson, Life Coach
American Sign Language fluent
Certified LIFE COACH by Transformation Academy

Increase Accountability for your NEW YEAR GOALS!

Personal support, Goal setting, Accountability, Positive regard, Safe space for self-expression, Problem solving, Relationship building skills

Call or Text: 574-221-1393
To set up an appointment

Services **NOT** provided:
Mental health counseling, diagnosis of mental health
If you suffer depression, anxiety, or any other mental health issues, please see a licensed professional.
Licensed Professional Counselor, State of Georgia

PIPESTONE SMALL ENGINE

We now carry 

Mowers, Chainsaws, Power Equipment

Engines, Parts, Service, Tractors




Kohler • Tecumseh • Briggs & Stratton
Ariens • Husqvarna • Tanaka • Gravely

4947 Park Road, Eau Claire, MI 49111 • 269-461-6421
www.pipestonesmallenginemi.net

- Cylinder Boring
- Machine Shop
- Engine Rebuilding
- Crankshaft Regrinding

WINTER

Continued from page A4

“For 21 years, the Hunter Ice Festival has brought free family fun to downtown, and this weekend was no exception,” Nelson said. “The festival’s goal is to boost local businesses by driving foot traffic and attracting new customers—and this year’s energy was off the charts. A huge thanks to the volunteers, especially the Culver’s team who braved the cold to serve ice cream, the amazing spectators who came to enjoy the sculptures, our generous sponsors – with a special shoutout to Presenting Sponsor Modineer Group – and the talented carvers who created stunning works of art.

“We’re already planning next year’s events—get ready for it to be bigger and better than ever.”



MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

PICKERS

Continued from page A1

mission to recycle and rescue forgotten relics.

Along the way, they want to meet characters with amazing stories and

fun items. They hope to give historically significant objects a new lease on life while learning a thing or two about America’s past along the way. The Pickers have seen a lot of rusty gold over the years and are always looking to discover something they’ve never seen before. They are ready to find extraordinary items and hear fascinating tales about them.

The American Pickers TV Show is looking for leads and would love to explore your hidden treasure. If you or someone you know has a unique item, story to tell, and is ready to sell... we would love to hear from you! Please note, the Pickers DO NOT pick stores, flea markets, malls, auction businesses, museums, or anything open to the public.

MEMBER

Continued from page A1

A meeting to discuss a new village budget will take place on at 9 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25. The next village council meeting will take place at 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17. The village hall will be closed during the day on the 17th for the President’s Day holiday.

SUSPECT

Continued from page A1

committed to the investigation of these matters, such investigations rely on the cooperation of witnesses and members of the public coming forward with any information that could assist in

bringing the investigation to a swift and just conclusion,” she said.

The last of the homicides occurring during that time period, on Sept. 20, 2022, resulted in the deaths of two girls, Yasmeen Scott and Demi Galvin, and injuries to three young men. A person of interest identified in that incident is currently in an Indiana prison for a separate murder.

TIPS

Continued from page A4

kitchen and bathrooms to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. First, remove harmful cleaners and household chemicals stored in the cabinets.

- Locate the water valves in your home so you can turn them off and prevent any pipes from bursting.
- Clean gutters to prevent ice dams.
- Check your heating system and schedule a maintenance check, if needed.
- Buy a backup heating system, such as a generator. Never use a generator in your home – it should

always be used outdoors.

- Never use an oven, gas stove or other unapproved devices to heat your home. This includes space heaters powered by kerosene or propane due to the risk of carbon monoxide.
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors near every sleeping area. Test your CO2 detectors regularly to ensure they’re working properly.
- Have a plan if you must leave your home – whether it’s a neighbor’s home or a nearby business such as a store or library – to limit the time you are exposed to the outside temperatures.

Preparing your vehicle:

- Always drive with your headlights on regardless

of time of day to ensure you can be seen.

- Be proactive about using your turn signals.
- Check the tread on your tires and regularly check your tire pressure.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent the fuel line from freezing.
- Maintain a consistent car maintenance schedule to check brakes, engine oil, car battery, heating system and more.
- Turn your hazard lights on when you pull over.
- Remain alert to your location when driving, such as watching for mile markers and exits, which will help responders locate you more easily in an emergency.
- Remove distractions

and always use hands-free options when available to keep your focus on the roadway.

- Pack an emergency kit with the following items:
 - Battery-powered radio.
 - Flashlight.
 - Phone charger and battery-powered phone charging port.
 - First-aid kit.
 - Tire repair kit.
 - Nonperishable food.
 - Bottled water.
 - Blankets and winter weather gear like gloves, hats and boots.

For more information on how to best prepare for winter weather, visit MIREADY’s website. For additional resources on cold weather health and safety, visit the MDHHS website.

JAIL

Continued from page A7

to one year probation, credit for two days served and \$1,908 in

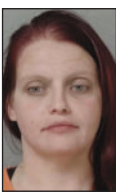
fines and costs. If she is successful on probation, the felony will be kept off her record.

The incident occurred Sept. 7, 2022 in Dowagiac.

Marrianne Kimberly Powell, 33, of Constantine, pleaded guilty to possession of meth as a

habitual offender and was sentenced to three years probation in the adult treatment court, credit for 74 days served, 120 days tether and \$2,628 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred Oct. 5, 2024 in Porter Township.



Powell

Niles Daily Star Sports

GOT RESULTS?
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Celebrate a life

SWEM CHAPEL
301 W Front St, Buchanan
269-471-2700
starksfamilyfh.com

Starks
Family Funeral Homes
& Cremation Services



BASKETBALL

Edwardsburg boys fall to Schoolcraft 52-47

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

SCHOOLCRAFT — Jared Frick says his Edwardsburg boys basketball team must increase its intensity and be more physical if the Eddies are to return to winning form.

After posting wins in seven of its first eight games, Edwardsburg lost its fourth straight game 52-47 Wednesday at Schoolcraft in non-league action.

“As a team we’re just struggling right now. In full transparency we had a great win over South Bend Ad-

ams in early January. After that win, I think we took a collective breath and felt like we were good enough. Since then our practice standards have dropped a little and we’re trying to work on that. We have to bring more intensity and be physical. Tonight we just didn’t execute well enough down the stretch to come away with a win,” Frick said.

“We’re in the middle of a stretch where we are playing a bunch of good teams and you don’t have time to work on a lot. We have to be at our best each time out.”

Senior Brody Schimpa scored 25 of

Edwardsburg’s points on the night. Connor Solarek added seven, Matt Anders five, Joe Shively and Blaise Crist contributed four apiece and Reed Gates added two points for the Eddies, now 7-5 overall.

Edwardsburg finished the game shooting 16-of-47 (34 percent) from the floor and made 11-of-12 attempts (92 percent) at the foul stripe.

The Eagles (9-3) ended the night shooting 21-of-47 (45 percent) and made all five of its free-throw attempts (100 percent).

See FALL, Page B3



Conor Solarek (11) from Edwardsburg scores two points in the first half against Schoolcraft in Wednesday's game.

| LEADER PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTOR

| LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BOWLING

Niles bowling teams defeat Vicksburg

COMMUNITY REPORT

NILES — The Niles Vikings bowling teams hosted the Vicksburg Bulldogs in a Wolverine conference matchup Wednesday, Jan. 15.

The Vikings swept the Bulldogs with the boys winning 22-8 and the girls winning 29-1. The boys were led by sophomore Shawn Atkins with a 421 series, followed by junior Aidan Kidwell with a 347 series, then by Senior

Adam Jackson with a 345 series. The Viking girls were led by sophomore Miley Kater with a 359 series, followed by sophomore Alexis Kidwell with a 281 series, then freshman Kenley Weston with a 255 series, then Freshman Maria Avila-Ramirez with a 240 series, finally Freshman Paris Knight with a 205 series.

The Vikings are home again next Wednesday against Edwardsburg.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTI WESTON | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

SMC women’s hoops beat KCC, GGRCC

COMMUNITY REPORT

BATTLE CREEK — SMC Women's Basketball got back on track with a pair of conference wins this week.

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, the Roadrunners travelled to Kellogg and roared back from their Saturday road loss at Ancilla. They showed the Bruins what real defense is, forcing 43 turnovers and holding multiple-time Conference Player of the Week Dayshauna Crowley to just nine points on her home floor.

The Roadrunners were up 25-10 after Q1, 47-20 at the half, 70-32 after the third and won handily 91-52. Freshman Rayvan Rush and sophomore Amara Palmer each had 21, freshman Maggie Weller added 12 and freshman Kate Gilroy went 4-6 from the field and 2-2 from the line for 10 points.

Back in the 1st Source Bank Fieldhouse on Saturday, Jan. 18 SMC flirted with disaster, letting a big lead slip away in the second quarter and going into the

locker room tied at 35 with the GRCC Raiders. The Roadrunners were up 51-44 after the third period, then had a tough time in the paint, letting the Raiders tie it again with 14.8 seconds left. After a couple of misses on each end, GRCC inbounded the ball with 1.0 on the clock and then whiffed an uncontested, point-blank layup to send the game to overtime.

In the extra period, SMC built a lead from the free throw line as Grand Rapids got cold from the field, allowing the Roadrunners to move to 2-1 in the Western Conference (13-5 overall), keeping their home record perfect at 8-0. The team was led by freshman Caley Strahan with 14 points and six rebounds off the bench. Three Roadrunners had 13 each: freshman Rayvan Rush, sophomore Amara Palmer and freshman Olivia Robinson, who grabbed 10 rebounds for a double-double.

Next up, SMC travels to KVCC to take on the Cougars on January 22.



MICAH JONES | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

FOOTBALL



A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

Notre Dame falls to Ohio State 34-23 in national title game

COMMUNITY REPORT

ATLANTA, Ga. — The University of Notre Dame football team ended its memorable and historic postseason run in the College Football Playoff National Championship Game held at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, on Monday night, falling to Ohio State 34-23.

The Irish end the season with a 14-2 record, earning more wins in a season than any team in program history and defeating a ranked team in six different months (a first in Football Bowl Subdivision history).

“We obviously didn’t play the way we needed to to get the outcome we want, but as I said to the guys in the locker room, there’s not many words to say when everybody is hurting,” said Dick Corbett Head Football Coach Marcus Freeman after the game. “I’m just proud of them and proud of what they’ve done. I’m proud of who they are, the way they represent themselves, and it’s just an honor to be on this journey with them.”

Ohio State jumped out to a 31-7 lead before a Notre Dame comeback over the third and

fourth quarters cut the lead to 31-23 with six minutes remaining. Riley Leonard threw for 255 yards and two touchdowns while rushing 17 times for 40 yards and another touchdown. Jaden Greathouse caught six of those passes, both touchdowns and compiled 128 receiving yards to become the first Irish receiver since 2020 to post 100 yards in back-to-back games.

Xavier Watts and Drayk Bowen led the defense with eight tackles each, with Bowen forcing a key fumble in the third quarter.

How it happened
The plan for the Irish offense was apparent on the first drive of the game. Riley Leonard carried the ball nine times and accounted for all five first downs the Irish earned, rushing for four – which included two fourth and short conversions – and throwing for a first down on a 19-yard connection to Eli Raridon.

Notre Dame converted a fourth and short at the Ohio State 45, then at the five yard line as the offensive line set the tone early in the contest. After Leonard powered for four yards on fourth and one at the five, he went in untouched on the next play to put the Irish up 7-0.

The scoring drive, taking 9:45 off the clock, was the longest for the Irish, in terms of playing time and plays, during the 2024 season.

“I think the best thing we did on that drive was just play by the — or stay by the chains,” Leonard said after the game. “That first drive we just came out and played Notre Dame football, took advantage of our matchups when we had to. We just drove the ball down the field. We had to run the ball a little bit. Everything was just clicking.”

Ohio State answered in 11 plays and six minutes, picking up a key first down on a quarterback keeper and executing a feigned reverse to Jeremiah Smith at the eight-yard line. Smith looked like he was heading into the backfield on the reverse, then put his foot in the ground and went out for a wide-open reception. The game was tied less than a minute into the second quarter.

Penalties doomed Notre Dame’s second drive of the game, as a false start and a holding penalty buried the Irish at their own 10-yard line. James Rendell

See FIGHT, Page B3



Freeman Named Bear Bryant Coach of the Year Award Winner

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Dick Corbett Head Football Coach Marcus Freeman has been named the winner of the Paul “Bear” Bryant Coach of the Year Award, which honors contributions that make the sport better for athletes and fans alike by demonstrating grit, integrity and a winning approach to coaching and life – both on and off the field.

One previous Notre Dame coach has won the Bear Bryant Award: Lou Holtz in 1988.

Freeman was also the winner of the 2024 Dodd Trophy and the 2024 George Munger College Coach of the Year Award, and was selected as the honorary head coach for the 2024 AFCA Allstate Good Works Team. In his third season at Notre Dame, he led the Irish to a National Championship appearance and a 14-2 record, with a final Associated Press ranking of No. 2.

The third-year head coach has an all-time record of 33-10, with a postseason record of 5-2, including three CFP wins in 2024. Freeman led Notre Dame to seven victories over opponents ranked in the AP Poll at the time of the game this season: No. 20 Texas A&M, No. 15 Louisville, No. 24 Navy, No. 18 Army, No. 9 Indiana,

No. 2 Georgia and No. 5 Penn State. The CFP victory over Penn State was the 14th ranked win of the Freeman era at Notre Dame, more than any other Irish head coach in the first three years of his tenure, and tied for the most of any FBS program over the last three years (Georgia, 14).

Notre Dame owned the most wins against AP ranked teams in 2024, with a 7-1 record. No other team faced more AP-ranked teams in 2024 than Notre Dame’s eight.

Among teams ranked in the final AP Top 25, Notre Dame notched four wins, the most for Notre Dame since 2002 (four). Notre Dame’s three wins over teams ranked in the final Top 10 is the most for the program since 1990 (three).

With the conclusion of the 2024 season, Notre Dame was first in pass efficiency defense (104.4), first in turnovers gained (33), first in defensive touchdowns (6), first in blocked kicks (6), second in fumbles recovered (14), second in blocked punts (3), fourth in passing yards allowed (169.4), fourth in scoring defense (15.5), fifth in passes intercepted (19), fifth in turnover margin (1.13), seventh in kickoff return defense (15.61), ninth in first downs (326), 10th in scoring offense (36.1) and 11th in total defense (307.4).

Notre Dame to open 2025 season at Miami

COMMUNITY NEWS

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame Football will open the 2025 season with a Labor Day Weekend matchup at Miami. The two programs will play on Sunday, August 31 at 7:30 p.m. ET at Hard Rock Stadium on ABC. It will mark the 28th meeting between the two programs.

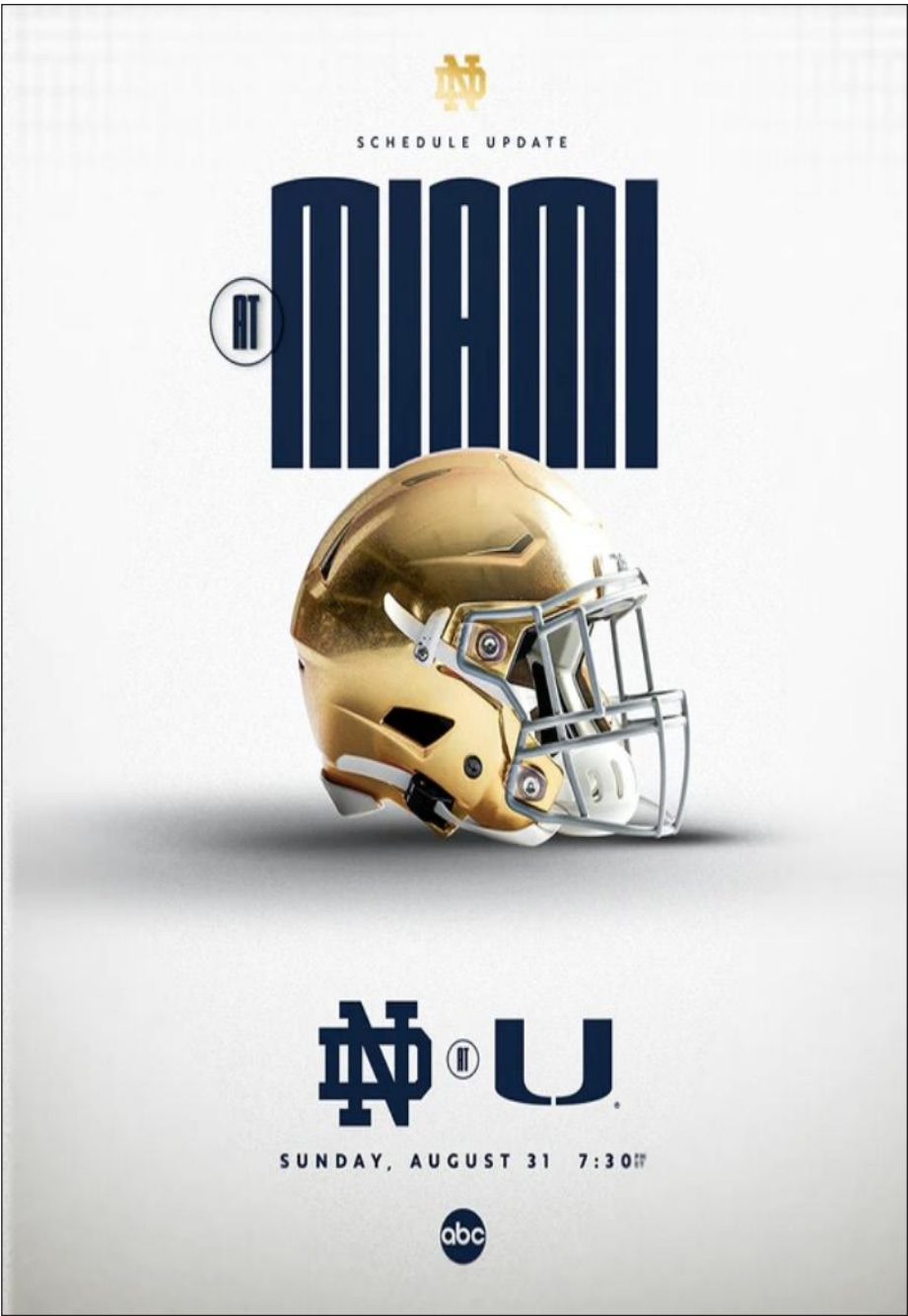
The Irish own a record of 18-8-1 in the all-time series against the Hurricanes, with the most recent meeting in

2017 (a 41-8 Miami win). The series between the two programs has seen several ranked matchups, with nine such meetings occurring when both teams have been ranked in the AP Top 25.

Notre Dame is 6-7-1 in the series when playing an away game vs. Miami. The Irish also have a 1-2 record in Hard Rock Stadium, with its most recent appearance there in the 2025 CFP Semi-final at the Orange Bowl, a 27-24 win over No. 5 Penn

State.

Notre Dame is 114-17-5 (.857) in season openers and has won seven of its last eight season openers. 2025 marks the fifth-straight season the Irish will start a season away from Notre Dame Stadium (2021 at Florida State, 2022 at Ohio State, 2023 vs. Navy at Aviva Stadium in Dublin, 2024 at Texas A&M). It is the first time in program history that the Irish have started five-straight seasons away from Notre Dame Stadium.



Brandywine hoops teams split with Berrien Springs



PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA HAGEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Adeline Gill attacks the basket during a Jan. 17 game against Berrien Springs. The Bobcats beat the Shamrocks 68-26. (Photo courtesy of Tanya Hagen)



PHOTO COURTESY OF TANYA HAGE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Brandywine’s Nylen Goins drives to the basket during a Jan. 17 game against Berrien Springs. The Shamrocks beat the Bobcats 63-48.

DAILY DATA

THURSDAY, JAN. 16

GIRLS BASKETBALL
BUCHANAN 55, BENTON HARBOR 15
At Benton Harbor
BUCHANAN (55): Caitlin Horvath 0, Aspen Berry 2, Evyn Pruett 9, Justyce Cashier 3, Makenna Williams 2, Cora Weinberg 2, Katie Ailes 22, Cam Carlson 0, Alyssa Carson 15. Totals 21 8-17 55.
BENTON HARBOR (15): Zakiera Baxter 9, Lovely Douglas 3, Keaira Lewis 0, Javie Swift 3, Harmony Smith 0. Totals 6 1-12 15.
Buchanan 15 40 51 55
Benton Harbor 5 7 11 15
3-point baskets: Buchanan 5 (Pruett 3, Carson 2), Benton Harbor 2 (Baxter 1, Douglas 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 11, Benton Harbor 13. Records: Buchanan 6-4 (2-2 Lakeland Conference), Benton Harbor 0-7 (0-4 Lakeland Conference).
CENTREVILLE 43, CASSOPOLIS 35
At Centreville
CASSOPOLIS (35): Jamayla Franklin 2, JaMya Hart 6, Madalynn Yakel 10, Maliyah Flowers 2, Cheyenne Redmond 0, Madison Nelson 12, Ryley Bowsher 3. Totals 14 7-21 35.
CENTREVILLE (43): L. Roberts 3, M. Webb 8, M. Stears 4, E. Reed 10, D. Alexander 8, B. Shindgledecker 7, L. Reed 3. Totals 16 8-17 43.
Cassopolis 8 12 21 35
Centreville 9 22 32 43
3-point baskets: Cassopolis 0, Centreville 3 (Roberts 1, Alexander 1, Shindeldecker 1). Total fouls: Cassopolis 14, Centreville 17. Records: Cassopolis 3-3 (3-2 Southwest 10), Centreville 5-3 (5-0 Southwest 10).

FRIDAY, JAN. 17

GIRLS BASKETBALL
BRANDYWINE 68, BERRIEN SPRINGS 26
At Niles
BERRIEN SPRINGS (26): Evelynn Weigand 0, Lilian Weigand 4, Adeline Weber 3, Zion Ellis 6, Addison Frakes 2, Aubre Smith 11. Totals 10 6-10 26.
BRANDYWINE (68): Adeline Gill 12, Karleigh Byrd 12, Ireland Prenkert 9, Mackenna Price 10, Lily Gill 9, Lexi Troup 6, Paige Krisher 3, Miley Young 7, Miyah Mason 0. Totals 23 10-15 68.
Berrien Springs 5 14 20 26
Brandywine 15 25 49 68
3-point baskets: Berrien Springs 0, Brandywine 12 (Prenkert 3, Price 2, L. Gill 2, Troup 2, Byrd 1, Krisher 1, Young 1). Total fouls: Berrien Springs 11, Brandywine 10. Records: Berrien Springs 8-1 (3-1 Lakeland Conference), Brandywine 11-0 (4-0 Lakeland Conference).
Game notes:
•Brandywine scored the game’s first seven points and never trailed.
•It was 15-5 at the end of the first quarter, a quarter in which Brandywine forced 13 turnovers and used them to score 10 points.
•All told, Brandywine forced 35 turnovers and scored 34 points off them.

•Berrien Springs entered the game undefeated.

PLAINWELL 61, NILES 42
At Niles
PLAINWELL (61): Alyssa Weldon 16, Tessie Keil 4, Anna Schierbeek 4, Anna Overway 24, Kaylee VanAtter 11, Jordyn Erdody 2. Totals 20 19-19 61.
NILES (42): Jessie Thornton 8, Tanaya Brown 6, Gianna Ball 4, Maddie Zache 8, Loryanna Harris 2, Jaliyah Woods 4, Kayla Kiggins 2, Mia Holmes 6, Ari Gerrits 2. Totals 14 9-9 42.
Plainwell 22 37 56 61
Niles 10 19 29 42
3-point baskets: Plainwell 2 (Weldon 1, Overway 1), Niles 5 (Holmes 2, Zache 2, Brown 1). Total fouls: Plainwell 16, Niles 23. Records: Plainwell 3-8 (2-4 Wolverine Conference), Niles 2-8 (0-7 Wolverine Conference).

VICKSBURG 50, EDWARDSBURG 38
At Vicksburg
EDWARDSBURG (38): Maddie Pobuda 11, Erin Solarek 6, Kourtney Zarycki 9, Mya Eberlein 4, Kya Shier 5, Kaylee Scott 3. Totals 13 6-10 38.
VICKSBURG (50): Scarlett Hosner 12, Kendra Cooley 14, Emily Zemitans 3, Ella Mann 4, Makayla Allen 12, Hannah DeVries 5. Totals 19 9-15 50.
Edwardsburg 10 15 24 38
Vicksburg 13 23 39 50
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 6 (Pobuda 3, Solarek 2, Scott 1), Vicksburg 3 (Allen 2, Cooley 1). Total fouls: Edwardsburg 12, Vicksburg 11. Records: Edwardsburg 8-3 (5-2 Wolverine Conference), Vicksburg 10-0 (7-0 Wolverine Conference).

BOYS BASKETBALL
BERRIEN SPRINGS 63, BRANDYWINE 48
At Niles
BERRIEN SPRINGS (63): Brady Blasko 4, Ethan McCrary 9, Micah McFarland 13, J.J. Frakes 13, Alex O’Dell 2, Brody Brewer 22. Totals 26 7-9 63.
BRANDYWINE (48): Nylen Goins 23, Elijha Burt 2, Will Hubbard 4, Ryder Richard 9, Emerson Gogley 9, Jordan Hester 1. Totals 15 15-22 48.
Berrien Springs 18 39 51 63
Brandywine 12 26 41 48
3-point baskets: Berrien Springs 4 (McCrary 3, Frakes 1), Brandywine 3 (Goins 1, Richard 1, Gogley 1). Total fouls: Berrien Springs 16, Brandywine 17. Records: Berrien Springs 9-2 (4-0 Lakeland Conference), Brandywine 6-5 (2-2 Lakeland Conference).
Game notes:
•The game was stopped with 2:46 remaining because of a medical emergency involving a fan.
•The game was tied at 8-8 before Berrien Springs went on an 8-0 run to take the lead for good. They led by as many as 18.
•Brewer scored 10 of his total in the first quarter.
•Goins scored 14 in the first half for Brandywine.

BENTON HARBOR 58, BUCHANAN 31
At Buchanan
BENTON HARBOR (58): Latrell Johnson 2, Jkwon Lewis 27, Avion Wilson 5, Desean Mathison 6, Zamier Clayton 2, Terry Wilson 3, Kesean Hobbs 5, Careem Williams 4, Damonee McBride 4. Totals 20 10-22 58.
BUCHANAN (31): Tyler Frame 5, Preston Payne 0, Liam McBeth 0, Karmine Brown 15, Jake Franklin 2, Logan Wiggins 4, Will Carson 2, Owen Thompson 3, Ari Johnson 0. Totals 14 2-10 31.
Benton Harbor 12 31 46 58
Buchanan 5 16 23 31
3-point baskets: Benton Harbor 8 (Lewis 7, Hobbs 1), Buchanan 1 (Brown 1). Total fouls: Benton Harbor 22, Buchanan 20. Records: Benton Harbor 9-3 (3-1 Lakeland Conference), Buchanan 7-4 (1-3 Lakeland Conference).

PLAINWELL 50, NILES 40
At Niles
PLAINWELL (50): Drew Nelson 9, Chib Amaezuchi 9, Reece Tranan 7, John Amacechi 8, Trason Stephenson 5, Gibon Youngs 3, Chad Winengel 9. Totals 18 8-14 50.
NILES (40): Quinton King Jr. 4, Brayden Favors 4, Andre Wells 16, Acie Kirtdoll 7, Derek Hill Jr. 3, Donovyn Williams 6. Totals 15 5-8 40.
Plainwell 7 20 31 50
Niles 9 21 33 40
3-point baskets: Plainwell 6 (Nelson 2, Amaezuchi 1, Tranan 1, Stephenson 1, Winengel 1), Niles 5 (Wells 2, A. Kirtdoll 2, Hill Jr. 1). Total fouls (fouled out): Plainwell 15, Niles 15 (A. Kirtdoll). Records: Plainwell 7-1 (5-1 Wolverine Conference), Niles 6-6 (5-3 Wolverine Conference).

VICKSBURG 58, EDWARDSBURG 40
At Vicksburg
EDWARDSBURG (40): Joe Shively 4, Brody Schimpa 10, Conor Solarek 4, Blaise Crist 7, Ayden Billingsley 3, Reed Gates 7, Matt Anders 5. Totals 15 8-13 40.
VICKSBURG (58): Graham Kubiak 9, Mitchell Beyer 16, Austin Androsky 4, Jordan Diekman 13, Anthony Marchese 14, Braylen Vallier 2. Totals 24 7-10 58.
Edwardsburg 5 23 32 40
Vicksburg 11 29 37 58
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 2 (Schimpa 2), Vicksburg 3 (Beyer 2, Kubiak 1). Total fouls: Edwardsburg 14, Vicksburg 14. Records: Edwardsburg 7-4 (3-4 Wolverine Conference), Vicksburg 5-8 (4-4 Wolverine Conference).

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 22

BOYS BASKETBALL
SCHOOLCRAFT 52, EDWARDSBURG 47
At Schoolcraft
EDWARDSBURG (47): Joe Shively 4, Brody Schimpa 25, Conor Solarek 7, Blaise Crist 4, Reed Gates 2, Matt Anders 5, Michael Wright 0. Totals 16 11-12 47.

SCHOOLCRAFT (52): Luke Rykse 5, Kodee Bienz 4, Tucker Walther 16, Ryley Bruner 2, Jaden Reiber 3, Ty Goddard 10, Jimmy Miller 12. Totals 21 5-5 52.
Edwardsburg 7 16 32 47
Schoolcraft 9 23 39 52
3-point baskets: Edwardsburg 4 (Schimpa 4), Schoolcraft 5 (Walther 2, Goddard 2, Rykse 1). Total fouls: Edwardsburg 11, Schoolcraft 12. Records: Edwardsburg 7-5, Schoolcraft 9-3

GIRLS BASKETBALL
EDWARDSBURG 54, SCHOOLCRAFT 32
At Edwardsburg
SCHOOLCRAFT (32): Addison Sziede 2, Lexi Blodgett 6, Sydney Drenth 9, Addison Blodgett 2, Sophie Mulder 3, Valerie Devries 10. Totals 11 8-14 32.
EDWARDSBURG (54): Ella Zache 7, Maddie Pobuda 11, Reagan Jenks 3, Erin Solarek 0, Kourtney Zarycki 16, Mya Eberlein 8, Kya Shier 9. Totals 19 11-20 54.
Schoolcraft 4 11 23 32
Edwardsburg 14 23 34 54
3-point baskets: Schoolcraft 2 (Drenth 1, Mulder 1), Edwardsburg 5 (Pobuda 3, Zache 1, Jenks 1). Total fouls: Schoolcraft 14, Edwardsburg 12. Records: Schoolcraft 4-6, Edwardsburg 9-3

SOUTH HAVEN 50, DOWAGIAC 44
At Dowagiac
SOUTH HAVEN (50): Ly’Nique Cunningham 32, S. Grieves 5, Charlotte Gryzbowski 1, Navaeh Cooper 4, Molly Verseput 8. Totals 19 8-20 50.
DOWAGIAC (44): Claire Hess 4, Marlie Carpenter 10, Zabrina Shivers 4, Brenna Mott 2, Niya Moss 1, Evie Lock 7, Olivia McIntosh 8, Bree Campbell 8. Totals 16 6-22 44.
South Haven 12 28 41 50
Dowagiac 8 11 23 44
3-point baskets: South Haven 4 (Cunningham 4), Dowagiac 6 (Campbell 2, McIntosh 1, Hess 1, Shivers 1, Lock 1). Total fouls (fouled out): South Haven 22 (Verseput), Dowagiac 18 (McIntosh). Records: South Haven 8-1, Dowagiac 3-7

OTSEGO 56, BUCHANAN 18
At Otsego
BUCHANAN (18): Caitlin Horvath 4, Aspen Berry 0, Evyn Pruett 0, Justyce Cashier 4, Makenna Williams 2, Katie Ailes 5, Cam Carlson 0, Alyssa Carson 1, Gabie Frain 2. Totals 5 7-12 18.
OTSEGO (56): Allie Proctor 9, Brooke Smalldon 6, Reagan Engbers 4, Mya Engbers 9, Madden Fitzpatrick 5, Malania Miller 8, Audrey Lingbeek 6, Tessa Proogh 9. Totals 17 14-20 56.
Buchanan 5 7 14 18
Otsego 12 24 38 56
3-point baskets: Buchanan 1 (Ailes 1), Otsego 7 (Proctor 3, Lingbeek 2, Smalldon 1, M. Engbers 1). Total fouls: Buchanan 17, Otsego 10. Records: Buchanan 6-5, Otsego 6-4

FIGHT

Continued from page B1

posted a 46-yard punt which also included a holding penalty on Ohio State, effectively flipping the field position and putting the Buckeyes at their own 24-yard line.

The Buckeyes kickstarted their drive with 15 and 13 yard plays to get to midfield. The Irish earned two third downs, but could not get Ohio State off the field. After Will Howard scrambled for a first down at the nine-yard line, Quinshon Judkins broke two tackles and scored from nine yards out to put his team up 14-7.

Notre Dame had to punt the ball away on their next possession after just three plays. Leonard picked up five on the first play, but a missed pass then mishandling of a snap forced another Rendell punt of 51 yards.

The Irish defense continued to earn third down plays, but could not stop the Buckeyes on those key downs. Ohio State would convert two



AMELIO RODRIGUEZ | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

more on their next scoring drive which concluded with a six-yard toss to Judkins with :27 seconds left in the first half. The Buckeyes would enter the halftime break a perfect six-for-six on third down and their quarterback Will Howard finished the first 30 minutes 14-15 passing for 144 yards and two touchdowns.

Judkins split through a huge hole on the right side of the Notre Dame line on the

second play of the second half for 70 yards and chased down by Leonard Moore at the five-yard line. Judkins scored two plays later, on another third-down conversion, and Ohio State took a 28-7 lead.

Notre Dame’s offense still could not find its way on the next drive. Forced into a fourth down punt situation the Irish special teams tried to provide a spark when Steve Angeli came in to throw a

pass to Jordan Faison, but the ball fell incomplete.

The Irish defense held Ohio State to a field goal but the lead was now 31-7.

The first scoring drive of the second half for the Irish was keyed by an obvious pass interference on Mitchell Evans to place the ball at the Buckeye 48-yard line. Leonard followed by converting yet another third down with his feet before finding Jaden Greathouse at the 29-yard line. The Irish wideout then made two defenders miss and scampered into the end zone for a 34-yard touchdown reception.

A Leonard to Jeremiyah Love shovel pass provided a two-point conversion and the OSU lead was cut to 16.

Ohio State continued to move the ball on their next possession, but a big play from the Irish defense downfield gave the offense another chance to score. Emeka Egbuka caught a pass at midfield and broke into the clear. Drayk Bowen chased him down from behind and forced a fumble which was recovered by Kyngstonn Vilamu-Asa at the Notre Dame

21-yard line.

Now with momentum, the Irish offense came alive for a drive down to the OSU nine-yard line. That momentum was sidetracked when Mitch Jeter bounced a 27-yard field goal off the right upright and the Buckeye lead remained 16 points.

The Irish defense earned a stop to get the offense the ball back with 6:25 remaining. Leonard found Beaux Collins for 12 yards then Evans for 33 more to get into scoring position. Leonard then looked to the now red-hot Greathouse who fought off pass interference to make his second touchdown grab of the game – one-handed – from 30 yards out to get the Irish within 10.

Notre Dame needed another two-point conversion to cut the lead to eight points and got it when Jordan Faison took an end around toss from Leonard and found a wide-open Collins in the end zone.

Needing to get another stop, Notre Dame forced Ohio State into a third-and-11 from their own 34-yard line. The Buckeyes went deep for Smith who was able to get a step on his defender and come down

with a 56-yard reception at the Notre Dame 10-yard line.

“Yeah, it was do or die. It was that type of down,” Freeman said. “If they run it and they get a 1st down — we’ve got to get them stopped, and we thought at that moment the best way to get them stopped is to run zero pressure. We have to have faith at some point that we can make a play. There was times in the second half that we did in man coverage, but he’s a heck of a player. He’s difficult to cover. You want to play zone, and they’ll find ways to pick you apart. You want to play man, they’ll find ways to get him the ball. It’s a talented offense, with that situation right there.”

Ohio State tacked on an insurance field goal a few plays later to represent the final score of 34-23.

“The outlook of Notre Dame football is extremely high,” Freeman said to close his post game press conference. “As long as the people in that locker room that come back understand what it takes, the work these guys have put in, there’s a lot of success in our future.”

FALL

Continued from page B1

Schoolcraft was paced in the scoring column by Tucker Walther with 16 points. The Eagles’ 6-foot-9 junior center Jimmy Miller, who just returned from being sidelined with a sprained ankle, added 12 points and Ty Goddard contributed 10 points for the winners.

The Eagles used its size advantage to outrebound the Eddies 25-18. Anders, the Eddies’ 6-5 senior forward, ripped down a team-best seven rebounds for Edwardsburg, while Schimpa added five boards.

Edwardsburg fought back

from a 10-point deficit on three occasions during the contest and pulled within one point of Schoolcraft, 48-47, on an Anders’ putback with 50.7 seconds left in the game.

Walther, a 6-4 senior, was fouled and he made both charity tosses to put Schoolcraft up 50-47 with 21 seconds to go.

Edwardsburg inbounded the ball and tried to get off a shot, but Miller used his big wingspan to strip the ball away from Solarek.

The Eddies quickly fouled Miller, who went to the stripe and made both attempts with two seconds remaining to seal the win.

“We have to be more physical and intense in those key moments,” Frick said.

Schimpa scored seven of his points in the final eight minutes and Solarek added four as the Eddies outscored the Eagles 16-13 before falling short.

Schoolcraft head coach Derrick Small was pleased with the win. It was the first game this season that the Eagles have had all nine of their players available.

“We dodged a bullet tonight. Edwardsburg is a real good basketball team when they play hard. They shoot the ball very well, are long, physical, athletic and well coached,” Small said.

“I’m just real proud to see our kids show some resilience near the end and hit a few key free throws. As we near the tournament, we have to be ready for the kind of ball pressure we saw tonight from Edwardsburg. Our

game plan was to take away the high post limit their shots in the post and force perimeter shots.”

Schoolcraft scored the game’s first five points but Edwardsburg quickly evened the game at 5-5 following a Kodee Bienz triple and Shively’s bucket inside.

Bienz’s pair of free throws moments later gave the Eagles their only lead of the night, 7-5, with 3:53 left in the opening stanza.

But the Eagles fought back to seize a 9-7 lead entering the second quarter following Miller’s basket inside and Walter converted a steal into a layup.

Schoolcraft outscored Edwardsburg 14-9 in the second period. Walther was responsible for five of the Eagles’ points as Schoolcraft got a layup and free throw from Jaden Rieber to lead

its guests 23-16 entering halftime.

“We didn’t come out with great intensity in the first half, especially right before halftime when we gave up a three-point-play. Our intensity level was much better in the second half. We just have to put it altogether,” Frick said.

Walther opened the Eagles’ third-quarter scoring with a triple that expanded his team’s lead to 26-16. The Eagles would hold that 10-point lead on two more occasions in the stanza. But Reed Gates made a pair of free throws and Solarek added one charity toss to pull the Eddies within seven, 39-32, going into the fourth quarter.

Edwardsburg hosts Plainwell Friday at 7:15 p.m.



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The former People's Protestant Church at 520 Pearl St. has been vacant for more than a decade and has become a dangerous site with a caving roof. The property is scheduled to be demolished using funds from the Blight Elimination Program.

Land Bank secures funding to demolish vacant church building

COMMUNITY REPORT

CASS COUNTY — Thanks to a grant secured by the Cass County Land Bank Authority, leaders at the Church of Cassopolis were able to solve a problem they have been working to solve for more than a decade.

The former church building at 520 Pearl St. in Cassopolis is one of seven buildings set to be demolished as part of Round 3 of the State Land Bank Authority's Blight Elimination Program.

Hope Anderson, Cass County Treasurer and chair of the Cass County Land Bank Authority, said the local land bank is utilizing funds to address seven vacant and blighted residential and commercial structures throughout the County.

"All of these properties

have been abandoned for a year or more, with utilities, plumbing, heating, and sewage systems either disconnected, destroyed, or rendered ineffective," Anderson said. "One of these properties, the former People's Protestant Church building, unused for over a decade, has fallen into severe disrepair, with a caving roof causing further structural deterioration. The building had to be boarded up due to squatters, and it has become a habitat for animals and pests, creating unsafe conditions for nearby residents."

Pastor Eric Williams, who has been with the People's Protestant Church for nearly 28 years, said he is grateful Anderson reached out with the opportunity, as the church has been working to find a way to demolish

the structure for many years. In 2005, the church erected a new structure and for a while, used the older building for Sunday School services and a food pantry, but the building has been vacant for a decade or more.

He said demolishing the structure will enable the Church to expand its parking lot and improve the overall experience for churchgoers and the surrounding neighborhood.

"I would love to say thank you for helping us accomplish and move forward in a project we've been wanting for so long but just couldn't find the right person or the right company to tear it down," he said. "Raising money in 2024-2025 at a church is not as easy as it was 20 to 30 years ago."

Anderson said the Cass County Land Bank Au-



thority recognizes the urgent need to address these issues to ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

"Through this partnership with local units of government, community stakeholders, and the State Land Bank Author-

ity, the Cass County Land Bank is taking immediate action to mitigate safety hazards, stabilize neighborhoods, and contribute to the revitalization of Cass County," she said. "We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our local partners to

achieve shared goals of alleviating blight and enhancing our community. Demolition efforts funded by the grant are expected to improve the quality of life for Cass County residents and support future opportunities for redevelopment in these areas."

Study finds majority trusts scientists, wants them to have greater role in policymaking

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — In what is considered the most comprehensive post-pandemic survey of trust in scientists, researchers have found a majority of people around the world carry widespread trust in scientists — believing them to be honest, competent, qualified and concerned with public well-being.

Researchers surveyed more than 72,000 individuals across 68 countries on perceptions of scientists' trustworthiness, competence, openness and research priorities.

The results, published in the journal Nature Human Behavior, also showed the general public's desire for more engagement from scientists through communication and policymaking.

"This was a major collaborative study, involving dozens of labs from across the world, all of them asking the same questions to specific audiences, in their specific languages according to their own customs," said Tim Weninger, the Frank M. Freimann Collegiate Professor of Engineering and director of graduate studies in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Notre Dame. "This is the first time I have seen such a distributed and collaborative effort in the social sciences. Our results show that, generally, denizens worldwide do indeed trust scientists."

Weninger is an expert in disinformation and fake news and one of 241 researchers who con-

tributed to the study as part of the Trust in Scientists and Science-Related Populism (TISP) Many Labs project, an international, multidisciplinary consortium of researchers at 179 institutions around the world.

Researchers sought to identify levels of trust in scientists, how demographic and country-level factors impact trust and vary between countries, perceptions of scientists in societal roles and policymaking, and which issues people believe scientists should prioritize.

A challenge to a 'popular, dominant narrative'

The study challenges a "popular, dominant narrative claiming a crisis of trust in science and scientists," the authors said. Building on previous studies, primarily focused on attitudes in the United States and Europe, the survey also includes individuals and countries long underrepresented in research.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (83 percent) believe scientists should communicate scientific concepts and research findings with the public. More than half (52 percent) believe scientists should be more involved in policymaking.

According to the study, "higher levels of trust were found among women, older people, residents of urban (vs. rural) regions," higher-income earners, individuals who identify as religious and those with left-leaning or liberal political views. Education also positively correlated with trust.

In most countries, however,

political orientation is unrelated to trust in scientists, the study found — one of several results that provided insight into global views.

Additionally, whereas some people might assume religion and science to be at odds, the TISP study found a positive association between trust and science and religious identity.

"That was the most surprising thing to me," Weninger said. "Religiosity positively and significantly correlated with trust in science. Science and religion are often seen as being at odds with one another. This global study shows that religiosity and trust in science are commonly held in tandem by people across the world."

The desire for more engagement

Overall, attitudes reveal a desire among the public to see scientists engage in science communication and policymaking — advocating for policies that address specific issues such as climate change and communicating research findings to government officials and politicians.

People also want to see scientists prioritize improving public health, solving energy problems and reducing poverty. The survey showed that people generally believe the scientific community prioritizes defense and military technology above all other research goals, which was found to be a lesser priority for most respondents.

Previous studies have shown trust in science and scientists as



PHOTO BY BARBARA JOHNSTON | UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Yanting Luo '20 works in a lab in Galvin Life Science Center.

critical to managing global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Weninger and the study's authors said the results of the TISP survey "can help scientists and science communicators better tailor their communication to different audiences" and stressed the need for international research that includes underrepresented and understudied populations.

Challenges and recommendations

While the results of the TISP study strongly challenge current narratives, the consortium noted their findings reveal some areas for concern.

Though 57 percent of global respondents believed scientists are honest, and 56 percent believed scientists are concerned with public well-being, only 42 percent believe scientists are receptive to feedback or pay attention to others' views.

"Anti-science attitudes, even if held by only a minority of people,

raise concerns about a potential crisis of trust in science, which could challenge the epistemic authority of science and the role of scientists in supporting evidence-based policymaking," the authors stated in the study.

With that in mind, the consortium suggested scientists find ways to be more open to feedback and dialogue with public audiences, increase public science communication efforts to highlight ongoing research in public health and energy, consider ways to reach conservative groups in Western countries and consider the role of the scientist in setting priorities aligned with public values.

The survey's full dataset is available via a comprehensive dashboard, providing insights on science-related populism, science communication behavior and public perceptions about climate change. Through the dashboard, users can explore specific data at the country level and compare results.

Classifieds Marketplace

NILES, BUCHANAN AND SURROUNDING AREAS

25 N. 2nd St.
Niles, MI 49120
(269) 591-6105

LeaderPub.com
classifieds@leaderpub.com
public.notices@leaderpub.com



Employment

Job Opportunities

The Tavern
Full-time experienced Cook, Bartender, and Server
Must be a team player with the ability to multitask with ease in a very busy environment. Schedule will be days/nights, weekends no exceptions. Great place to work with competitive pay to start with increases.
Please no phone calls; Application can be picked up at the bar.

Assistant Business Unit Leader
Please send resume to:
Modineer Company LLC,
Attn: Sabrina Pesce – HR Mgr.,
2102 S. 11 th St.,
Niles, MI 49120.

Merchandise

Fuel and Wood



FIREWOOD SEASON IS HERE!
CALL US TO SET UP YOUR FIREWOOD DELIVERY!
We have ranks and cords cut perfect for a wood burner or fireplace!
574-217-8279

Do you have available jobs?

Call 269-591-6105 to let others know about job opportunities at your business.

Miscellaneous For Sale

For sale, a refurbished mid-2019 Apple Macbook Pro with .4 GHz Intel Core i5 (13.3 inch, 8GB RAM, 256GB SSD) Space Gray (Renewed)
Brand Apple
Model Name MV962LL/A
Screen Size 13.3 Inches
Color Space Gray
Hard Disk Size 256 GB
CPU Model Core i5
Ram Memory Installed Size 8 GB
Operating System Mac OS
Special Feature IPS Retina Display, True Tone Technology, Touch Bar | Touch ID Sensor
Graphics Card Description Integrated
Asking \$500. It is still in the box.

Also for sale, a RIF6 adjustable height standing desk converter — 32-inch wide laptop riser or dual monitor workstation. Easily sit or stand with gas spring lift. Still in the box. Asking \$75. Will sell in combo with the computer or separately.

Call (269)462-0183

You can have goals... and pizza



Get started with 3 months free*

weightwatchersoffer.com/47



Weight Watchers

*With select plan purchase. Restrictions apply.

Want to Buy Merchandise

Wanted: Antique Doll Collections, Pre-1970's
We also buy antiques & collectibles!
(574)286-6642

Notices

Community Events

University of Notre Dame du Lac in Notre Dame, Indiana, duLac@nd.edu

Rentals

Apartments

Karl King Holdings,LLC
"Where The City's Finest Call Home"
NOW LEASING!!!
•Pet Friendly
•Utilities Included
•Income-Based Rent
Apartments for Independent Seniors(62-up, handicap/ disabled)
515 E.Monroe Street
South Bend,IN 46601
574-282-2896
TTY:1-800-743-3333



Stone Lake Manor Apartments

Now accepting applications for 1 & 2 bedroom apartments with prices starting at \$668.

Located at
145 Stone Lake St,
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Near the intersection of State and Stone Lake St.

Free water, sewer, and trash. Rent is based on income for those who qualify. 62+, disabled of any age. For information, please call **269-445-3333**

For the hearing impaired, please call TTY: 7-1-1

Professionally managed by Medallion Management, Inc.
www.medallionmgmt.com

Financed by Rural Development
"This institution is an equal opportunity provider"

Wanted To Rent

Looking for Large Storage Space in Niles or Buchanan Area. All items are clean, no junk. Call (269)262-0162

Do you have available jobs?

Call 269-591-6105 to let others know about job opportunities at your business.

Transportation

Boats & Watercraft

1979 Starcraft 18' Aluminum Deep V 110hp Johnson & Trailer (269)683-2400



2015 Polar Kraft TX 165 Bass Fishing Boat
Boat has very low mileage. Seller mainly used the trolling motor. Didn't have much time for fishing. Price is for boat, Trailmaster trailer, trolling motor, Mercury BigFoot 60 HP boat motor and fish finder equipment. If I do not answer, leave a message. Pictures available via text. \$17,900.00 OBO. 574-850-1938 269-228-1216

Raise your hand if you want your business to make LESS money next year.

We didn't think you would. Do you need to successfully market on a tight budget? Leader Publications Classified Marketplace has customizable programs available to fit any budget.

DON'T WAIT!
Call TODAY
269-591-6105

Motorcycles & ATV's

1999 Kawasaki Voyager 12 Touring Bike New Carlisle Area. Good condition. 80k road miles. \$2,000 firm. Call 574-220-4275 or 574-234-8038

Services

Automotive Services



JUMP STARTS PLUS
Car problems ruining your day?
Call us and we'll be on our way!

- Auto Glass Replacement
- Jump Starts
- Lock Outs
- Towing
- Tire Changes
- Fast On-site Service

269-313-6852

CASH PAID FOR UNWANTED VEHICLES!!!
FREE HAUL OFF!!!

Clock Repair

Quality Clock Repair
Front Street Framery
801 East Front Street
Buchanan, MI
House calls, Free estimates.
269-409-1031

Construction

Michiana Masonry & Construction
All your Masonry needs!
Chimney Cleaning
Insured & Bonded
Senior Discounts
269-362-1566

SLIM'S CONSTRUCTION

WE SPECIALIZE IN POLE BARN ROOFING & CONCRETE

65280 M-66 STURGIS, MI 49091

SAM SCHWARTZ
269-221-0159

Junk Removal

AMERICAN TRASH Trash & Junk Hauling
•Appliances•Truck•Trailer
•Labor•Rental Properties
•Demo Clean-Outs
Veteran Owned Company
Txt/Call: 574-904-8760
useamericantrash.com

Miscellaneous Services

AUCTION
Irish Trust Online Auction. Bidding though Feb. 5. 16-gauge shotgun, kitchen/laundry appliances, furniture, collectible comic books, toys, jewelry and more! To bid, see entire catalog visit Bid.SherwoodAuctionServiceLLC.com. Questions? Call 1-800-835-0495.

BUILDINGS
POLE BARNs We build ALL year long! BUILT BEST BARNs IN A RUSH? CALL US!!!! Best Quality, Best Service, Now In Our 25TH Year! Over 4,000 Buildings In Michigan Call for QUOTES License/Insured 989-205-2534

BUSINESS SERVICES
METAL ROOFING regular and shingle style, HALF OFF SPECIAL COLORS! Lifetime hail asphalt shingles. Vinyl siding. Licensed and insured builders for 40 years. AMISH CREW. 517-575-3695.

MATTRESSES
Adjustable Bed Brand New with mattress. Made in U.S.A, in plastic, with warranty. Retail Cost \$3,995.00 sacrifice for \$875.00 Call for showing or delivery: DanDanTheMattress-Man.com. 989-923-1278

MISCELLANEOUS
Amish-built mini-cabins starting at \$5,295. Made in Michigan! We deliver statewide. Call 989-832-1866. MyNextBarn.com.

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 7-Year warranty with qualifying purchase* Call 1-855-922-0420 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material – steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer – 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-888-718-1856

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-844-369-2501

BATH & SHOWER UPDATES in as little as ONE DAY!
Affordable prices - No payments for 18 months! Lifetime warranty & professional installs. Senior & Military Discounts available. Call: 1-844-587-8518

Donate your car, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-877-691-4117 today!

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 888-815-6233

Acculevel. Your foundation repair and basement waterproofing experts. Whether basement, crawl space or concrete slab we'll guide you on the right path to a healthy home. Act now! Up to \$600 off. Restrictions apply. Call for a free consultation. 1-844-700-4986

We Buy Houses for Cash AS IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Houses: 1-855-504-0056

We buy 8,000 cars a week. Sell your old, busted or junk car with no hoops, haggles or headaches. Sell your car to Peddle. Easy three step process. Instant offer. Free pickup. Fast payment. Call 1-833-324-2582

Looking for a home?

Look in our classifieds section and learn of great deals for you and your family.

Pressure Washing

J&H POWER WASHING
HOUSES, DRIVEWAYS, DECKS, FENCING, RV'S/MOTOR HOMES.

WHY CALL THE REST WHEN YOU CAN CALL THE BEST?
(269) 684-5947
(269) 340-2440
(269) 357-9594

Roofing and Guttering

Bill's Roof Repair
Residential & Commercial
•Repairs•New Roofs
•Shingles•Flat Roofs
•Metal/Rubber•Flashing
•Chimney Repairs
•Vent Pipes•Gutters•Sidsings
Lifetime Warranty on All Labor Performed
Free Estimates
Call Us Now!!
269-591-5700
Visit us at:
billsroofrepair.com
and Facebook!!

MIDWEST ROOFING

Family Owned Since 1984
Lifetime Warranty Shingles
Flat Roofs & Gutter Covers

Call (269) 684-7199

Tree Service

EAGER BEAVER TREE SERVICE
FREE ESTIMATES!!!
•TOTAL REMOVAL, TRIMMING & LOT CLEARING.
•STUMP GRINDING
•STORM DAMAGE
•SEASONED FIREWOOD
SAME DAY SERVICE, EXCELLENT CLEAN-UP
*60 & 80 FT. BUCKET TRUCK
FULLY INSURED.
PLEASE CALL
574-848-5845.

Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE
ABANDON VEHICLE AUCTION
JANUARY 30, 2025 AT 8:30 AM

2005 Volvo
Vin YV1TH592651410448
2020 Chevrolet
Vin 1G1ZD5ST7LF124342
Contact, RoadRunner, towing @ 269-429-5080
Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM for viewing locations and times
Social distancing rules, still apply and bidding starts at acquired fees

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 25, 2025
AV/05 VOLVO

PUBLIC NOTICE
BID NOTICE

SEEKING MBE/WBE SUB-CONTRACTORS R. Yoder Construction, Inc., an EEO Employer is seeking qualified MBE/WBE Subcontractors for the following project. City of Niles – 2024 CAPITAL FUNDING PROJECT, Niles, MI Bid Date: 1/31/2025 - Time: 3:00PM. Sub-Contractor bids must reach our office no later than 1/30/2025. Anyone interested in bidding on this project should call: 574-773-3502 or email: estimating@ryoderconstruction.com for plans and specifications.

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 18 and 25, 2025
BID

PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC HEARING -
Riverwood Center
2024 Annual Plan Submission
Wednesday, February 19, 2025 @ 4:00 PM
1485 M-139, Benton Harbor (Bldg 2)
Ric Compton, CEO

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 25, 2025
HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE
SYNOPSIS OF THE MINUTES OF THE ONTWA TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONDAY JANUARY 13, 2025

The regular meeting of the Ontwa Township Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00pm with a pledge to the flag. Roll call showed Supervisor

Public Notices

Christensen, Clerk VanBelle, Treasurer Leist, Trustees Stutsman, Kozinski, Marchetti and Bolock were present. Approval of the Agenda
Public Comment: Brigid Forlenza addressed the Board.
Approval of Consent Agenda
Commissioner Report: Rose-ann Marchetti
Committee Board Reports: No reports this month.
Old Business: Elkhart Road Bike Path
New Business: Wastewater Bender Electric, Adams Remco Toshiba 3025AC, Cemetery SIMS, Planning Commission Appointment.
Schedule of township meetings: Board of Trustees February 10, Ambulance Board
February 12, Police Board February 13, Wastewater Board February 22, Planning Commission February 5.
Meeting Adjourned 7:27pm
Minutes of Board of Trustee meetings may be found on the Township website: www.ontwatwp.org

Respectfully submitted by Tina VanBelle, Ontwa Township Clerk
Approved for Publication by Supervisor Meryl Christensen

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 25, 2025
SYNOPSIS 01.13.25

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
RE: DONALD B. DAHM, DECEASED
DATE OF BIRTH: AUGUST 15, 1938
1205 SASSAFRAS LANE NILES, MI 49120
CITY OF NILES BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO ALL CREDITORS:
The decedent, DONALD B. DAHM, died on January 3, 2025, and lived at 1205 Sassafras Lane, Niles, Michigan 49120, a resident of the City of Niles, Berrien County, Michigan. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the decedent will be forever barred unless presented to his daughter, NADINE R. KLEIN, his heir-at-law whom he named personal representative in his Last Will & Testament and whose address is listed below, within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. No probate proceedings are anticipated.

Nadine R. Klein
Named Personal Representative
2700 Heathcliff Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
616-204-6141

James J. Mollison, P17884, 4 South Lincoln Avenue, Niles, MI 49120, 269-684-7600

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 25, 2025
EST/DAHM, D.

Raise your hand if you want your business to make LESS money next year.

We didn't think you would. Do you need to successfully market on a tight budget? Shelby & Chilton County Classifieds has customizable programs available to fit any budget.

DON'T WAIT!
Call TODAY
205.280.5667

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT OF BERRIEN COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS DECEDENT'S ESTATE CASE NO. 2024-0615-DE-G

Court Address: 811Port Street, 4th Floor, St. Joseph, MI 49085
269-983-7111

Estate of Charles Paul Hess
Date of Birth 01.10.1956
TO ALL CREDITORS:**
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, Charles Paul Hess, died 04.30.2024
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Raymond Hess and Jean Gillis, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port Street, 4th Floor St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice. 01.21.25

Nicholas R. Hogue (P81291)
107 Pennsylvania Ave. Dowagiac, MI 49047 (269) 782-9895

Raymond Hess
2711 N. Side Blvd South Bend, IN 46615 574-276-3928

Niles Daily Star:
Jan. 25, 2025
EST/HESS, C.

DEALS ON WHEELS

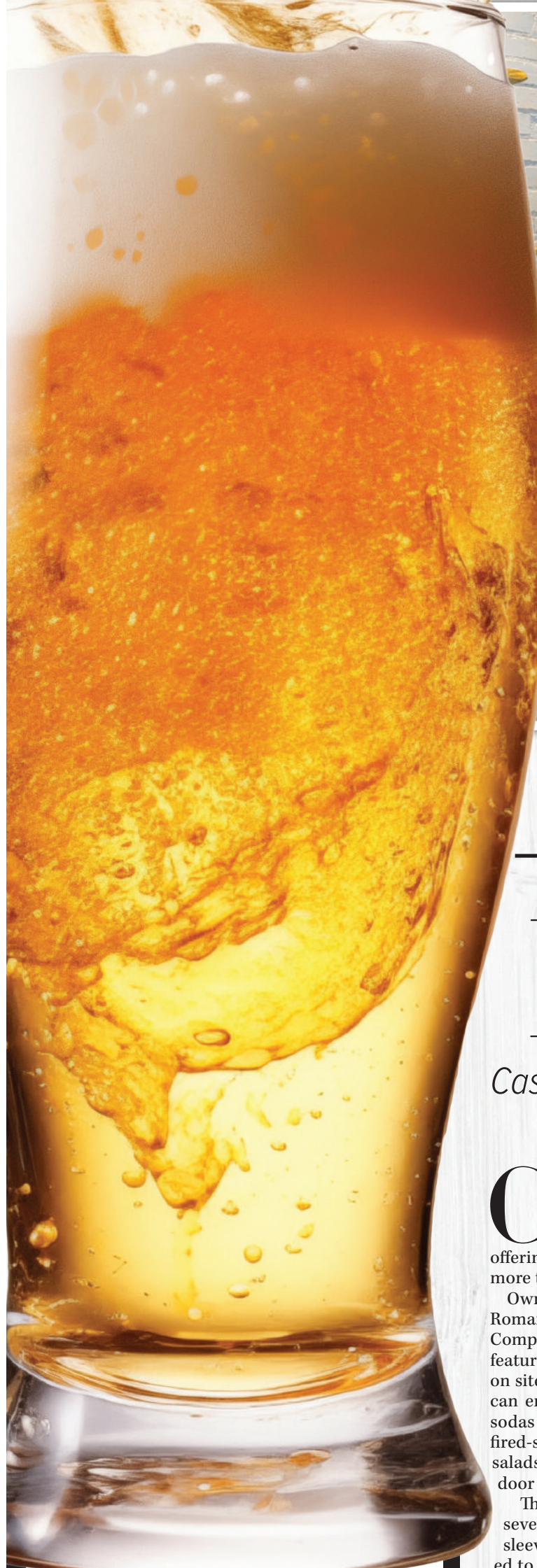
0 DOWN DELIVERS!

ON THE SPOT APPROVAL

 2006 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER LT 4 X 4 Cash and carry special Only \$3,900	 2013 FORD FIESTA TITANIUM Just in!! Every option, super low miles Only \$9,900	 TOYOTA SIENNA LE Leather, moonroof, looks, runs, and drives great Only \$9,900	 PONTIAC SOLSTICE Low miles, great shape...Nice car to drive to car shows Only \$13,900	 2015 HONDA CIVIC LX CVT Automatic with backup camera, cruise control and amazing gas mileage! Only \$13,900	 2021 HYUNDAI ELANTRA Low miles, amazing gas mileage! Only \$14,900
 2018 CHEVY COLORADO EX-CAB Just in! Perfect delivery truck with a Tommy lift gate Only \$15,900	 2020 CHEVY TRAX Lease unit with only 39,000 miles Only \$17,900	 2020 HYUNDAI IONIQ Gets 60 MPG!! Only \$17,900	 2022 CHEVY MALIBU LT Just in!! MOONROOF BABY!! Only \$18.900	 2018 TOYOTA RAV 4 4 X 4 Just in!! These sell fast... Only \$19,900	 2018 RAM PRO MASTER CITY Just in!! Save thousands on this 59,000 mile gas saver Only \$19,900
 2019 CHEVY SILVERADO CREW HIGH COUNTRY 4 X 4 Jacked up Duramax with every toy! Must See!!	 2013 JEEP WRANGLER UNLIMITED Just in!! It's a cheap jeep Only \$19,900	 2018 FORD ESCAPE TITANIUM AWD Just in!! One owner, every option, low, low miles Only \$21,900	 2019 KIA STINGER OH BABY!! Only \$23,900	 2021 TOYOTA RAV 4 AWD Just in!! Loaded with options, not price Only \$24,900	 2021 VOLKSWAGEN ID4 GO ELECTRIC Only \$25,900
 2020 CHEVY TAHOE 4 X 4 Just in!! Save thousands Only \$27,900	 2003 CHEVY SSR BIG BLOCK, SUPER RARE Only 43,000 miles Only \$29,900	 2021 CHEVY COLORADO 4 X 4 Just in!! Off lease, one owner Only \$29,900	 2020 JEEP WRANGLER 4 X 4 Just in!! Off lease, only 33,000 miles Only \$29,900	 2024 GMC TERRAIN SLT AWD Just in!! Loaded moonroof with teen miles.. MSRP over \$41,000 Only \$31,900	 2021 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE L LIMITED Just in!! Off lease, 1 owner, like new EVERY OPTION! Only \$33,900
 2020 CHEVY EXPRESS EXTENDED CARGO Just in!! Very rare. 6.0 litre V-8. Only 47,000 miles Only \$34,900	 2017 FORD F-150 CREW PLATINUM 4 X 4 Just in!! Mint condition with every option & super low miles Only \$34,900	 2016 FORD F-250 XLT 4 X 4 Crew cab, long box Only \$34,900	 2020 CHEVY SILVERADO CREW Z-71 Oh So Purdy! Only \$41,900	 2020 CHEVY SILVERADO LT CREW 4 X 4 Diesel, Super low miles Save thousands! Only \$45,900	 2020 FORD EXPEDITION LIMITED MAXI 4 X 4 Every option, super low miles. Get ready for winter now Only \$49,900

MICHIGANA *Life*

• ENTERTAINMENT • SHOPPING • DINING • ART



MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Kortney and Ted Romanetz opened Cassopolis Beer Company last year.

— ‘A SPACE FOR EVERYONE’ —

Cassopolis Beer Company brings brews, bites to Cassopolis

BY MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

CASSOPOLIS — A building that has watched over downtown Cassopolis for nearly 130 years is now offering tasty brews, bar bites and more to the community.

Owned by Ted and Kortney Romanetz, the Cassopolis Beer Company, 139 N. Broadway St., features a variety of beer brewed on site, a tap room where visitors can enjoy beer, wine, cider, craft sodas and neo-neapolitan wood fired-style pizzas, appetizers and salads as well as a spacious outdoor patio.

The brewing space features several fermentation tanks, sleeved in jackets and connected to a thermostat to control the precise temperatures required for various-styles of beer. A sealed cold-room houses 2,000-pound vessels resting on an insulated floor, a feat which required finding a floor that could handle the weight and building the room around the vessels once they were in place.

“It was a lot of excitement, joy and fear,” Kortney said. “We just felt like we were finally ready. We did all we could do and we just gotta go for it and see what happens. People love the beer, so that’s really exciting.”

CBC first opened in July of last year and is open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week.

“We’re hoping to get a lot of locals in here and host certain events and stuff to get us through the winter months and kind of bring people down to this area during that time so that we can be open every day and keep consistency,” Kortney said.

The business has been well-attended with community members who were excited to see the space brought to life again. The building, which was originally built in 1895, was home to the Central Cass Fire Department until its relocation to M-60 in 2017.

Local Jim Beebe was happy to see the brewery open and hopes the it will become an entertainment destination for people from Cassopolis and beyond.

“I’m just really happy to see the community growing and ex-



“It was a lot of excitement, joy and fear. We just felt like we were finally ready. We did all we could do and we just gotta go for it and see what happens. People love the beer, so that’s really exciting.”

— Kortney Romanetz

While he brews beer, Kortney will focus on front room operations. Large ovens serve up neo-neapolitan wood fired-style pizzas, inspired by favorite pizzas from Colorado and named after their favorite places there. Appetizers, salads and sandwiches are also offered on the menu.

Ted, who studied sustainability in school, will utilize local fruits and other ingredients in the beer and food.

According to Kortney, the community’s support and anticipation has been much appreciated.

“It’s been wonderful,” she said. “Ted’s coming back home, I’m living here for the first time so that was kind of nerve-racking but it’s been great.”

The Romanetzes plan to host events in the space and will offer doggy space for canine companions this summer.

“That will be nice for people,” she said. “We’ll have yard games and everything.”

The couple looks forward to serving the Cassopolis community for years to come.

“We hope to bring a warm space to hang out with your friends and try a drink or a yummy pizza and nice events,” she said. “We have a great patio – not a lot of places out here have good patios, you’re always looking for them. We really want a nice space for anyone and everyone to gather, and children are welcome because it’s Michigan.”



Grateful Dead tribute band to perform at The Acorn

COMMUNITY REPORT

THREE OAKS — Terrapin Flyer: A Tribute To Grateful Dead is returning to The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. Doors open at 7 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$25 (\$30 day of show) and reserved seating is \$55 (\$60 day of show). Tickets can be purchased at acornlive.org.

About the artists

For the past 25 years Terrapin Flyer has been touring with the finest in the Grateful

Dead community of musicians and has become a fixture of the national music scene, playing regularly at venues around the country and appearing at music festivals. The band has a dedicated following among fans of the Grateful Dead and other jam bands, and is known for their authentic interpretations of rare and classic Dead songs. Over the years, Terrapin Flyer has toured with many notable musicians, including Melvin Seals from the Jerry Garcia Band, Vince Welnick, Tom Constanten from the Grateful Dead and many other Dead-related musicians. Over-

all, Terrapin Flyer is a talented and highly regarded band that has made a significant impact on the national music scene.

It started in 1999 at the Boulevard Cafe in Chicago as a Grateful Dead jam night and soon became a touring Grateful Dead band featuring legends in the Grateful Dead. In 2001, TF began touring with final keyboardist of the Grateful Dead Vince Welnick. In 2004, touring with Melvin Seals who played Hammond organ in the Jerry Garcia Band. And then in 2006 with another of the Grateful Dead keyboardists Tom Constanten. Some of these tours

included several first ever line-ups with the combination of Melvin Seals, Tom Constanten and Mark Karan from Ratdog. These were not passing associations but long term bonds with these legends. For 15 years TF toured with Melvin Seals and kept a busy schedule with him as a side gig to his band Melvin Seals & the JGB. With Constanten they were mentioned in the Rolling Stone's "Guide to the Grateful Dead" for the many years of touring with him.

Terrapin Flyer has been an evolution of band members over the past quarter of a cen-

tury and currently features musicians that share the gravitas of having toured many years with members of the Grateful Dead and Jerry Garcia Band. At its core Terrapin Flyer is a band of deadheads who are committed to attempting to recapture the spirit and essence of the Grateful Dead by incorporating the roots music of jazz, blues and bluegrass into jams and bringing the music to new and similar places. Josh Olken is the lead guitarist, Wavy Dave on the bass, Jon Reed is the drummer, keyboardist is Michael Cole and rhythm guitarist Doug Hagman.



‘Ice guru’ to be featured at annual Ice Time Festival

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Now in its 28th year, Dowagiac's annual Ice Time Festival will once again offer a reason to get out of hibernation and visit Dowagiac.

The winter festival, a Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce event, is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 1 and takes place mostly in the central business district, with some activities hosted by businesses in close proximity to downtown.

"I am thrilled to share that Ice Sculptures, Ltd. from Grand Rapids, Michigan, will be on site carving a very large, multi-block piece during Dowagiac's Ice Time Festival," announced event chairperson Kris Soenen. "The Ice Guru himself, Randy Finch, will be onsite to create an extra-large marquee ice sculpture out of 10 blocks of ice."

"We are excited to do things a little differently this year. The heart of this festival has traditionally been the carving of many, single ice blocks on event day," stated Soenen. "But the number of ice carvers in the region is diminishing as many retire and fewer take up the craft. Additionally, many communities in the region hold their winter events on the same day, and in fact, every weekend in winter. Over the years it has gotten harder to compete with bigger



Beau Fairman, left, and Scott Gerdeman, of Ice Sculptures, Ltd., carving at Grand Rapids' 2025 World of Winter event.

festival for carvers. So, in order to not just order in already carved ice blocks from the ice house that are then plunked on the sidewalk, we have found a way to continue the tradition of live artisan carving, creating art on the sidewalk during Ice Time Festival."

Ice Sculptures Ltd. was founded over a decade ago in Grand

Rapids, Michigan, by a team of passionate and skilled ice sculptors. Since then, the company has grown into a premier ice sculpture company serving clients across the Midwest and beyond. The story of Ice Sculptures Ltd. begins with founder, Randy Finch, who started his career as a chef and quickly developed a passion for ice carving. Randy's

passion for ice sculpting eventually led him to become a household name, thanks in part to his time on the Food Network's popular show, "Ice Brigade".

Finch has been ice carving for over 40 years. His favorite ice carving is always the next one he creates. By far, his favorite tool is the chainsaw. Because of his talent he can accomplish

90% of a sculpture with a chainsaw alone.

Finch will be assisted by the business' General Manager, Beau Fairman, who has been carving for 12 years. His favorite ice carvings are the interactive ones. He enjoys a challenge and his favorite tool to use when carving is the burr bit, called "the flame", used for several different techniques.

Ice carver Scott Gerdeman will join them. He started his carving journey this year with pumpkins and now does live ice carving demonstrations with the team. Scott's favorite tool to use when carving is the die grinder because of the ease of use and the amount of control he has when using it. He loves creating animal carvings, making them more realistic or animated.

The marquee ice carving is just one of the events and activities scheduled. For a detailed schedule of events visit the Chamber's website, DowagiacChamber.com, or its Facebook page.

The Ice Time Festival has been underwritten by Ascension Borgess Lee Hospital, The Baker's Rhapsody, Dowagiac Area History Museum, Dowagiac Credit Union, Dowsett Chiropractic Health Center, Hale's Hardware, Lake Effect HVAC Co., Lyons Industries, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, Who Knew Consignment and Xfinity.

Annual St. Joseph Ice Fest to take place Feb. 7-9

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

ST. JOSEPH — One of southwest Michigan's most popular events is set to take shape in a few weeks.

The annual St. Joseph Ice Fest will take place from Friday, Feb. 7 to Sunday, Feb. 9 in downtown St. Joseph.

Sponsored by Silver Beach Pizza, the annual event is free and open to the public. Dozens of expertly carved ice sculptures from prominent artists will be placed around the downtown for people to view. The event will also feature a Scavenger Hunt, Ice Interactives and more.

ALL WEEKEND

Scavenger Hunt - Stop in the Welcome Center and grab a map to start the frosty fun.

FRIDAY, FEB. 7

5 to 8 p.m. — Professional Individu-

al Carving - Watch carvers turn frozen blocks into works of art.

7 p.m. — Fire and Ice Tower

SATURDAY, FEB. 8

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Professional Team and Individual Carving - Watch as teams of carvers transform blocks of ice into frosty creations.

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Ice Interactives: Enjoy interacting with some of the carved creations.

MAGIC TOUR feat. Magician John Dudley

1 p.m. — Downtown St. Joseph (Corner of State & Pleasant)

2:30 p.m. — Silver Beach Center

4 p.m. — Silver Beach Center

SUNDAY, FEB. 9

View completed sculptures on the last day of this magical weekend.



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Johnny Cash tribute artist to perform at Silver Creek Event Center

COMMUNITY REPORT

NEW BUFFALO — The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians’ Four Winds” Casinos have announced The Man in Black: A Tribute to Johnny Cash at Four Winds New Buffalo’s Silver Creek Event Center on Friday, March 28 at 9 p.m. Eastern.

Ticket prices for the show start at \$29, plus applicable fees, and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster beginning on Friday, January 24 at 10 a.m. Eastern. Hotel rooms are available on the night of the concert and can be purchased with event tickets.

With his similar looks, baritone voice, and spot-on mannerisms, Shawn Barker’s uncanny resemblance to the original “Man In Black” revitalizes the



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

ergetic show features Barker in character throughout the entire evening, walking the audience through each era of Cash’s life

and music, including hits like “Folsom Prison Blues.” “I Walk The Line,” “A Boy Named Sue.” “Hurt” and “Ring of Fire,” complete with a full backing band.

Shawn Barker’s first Man In Black show was held in 2004 at a casino in Niagara Falls and has since performed over 1,000 shows in 12 countries, selling more than half a million tickets over the course of his career. Born and raised in a working-class suburb of St. Louis, Barker took a schoolboy love for singing in church with his family and turned it into a career. The path to his current success wasn’t a straight line from gospel choir to Johnny Cash tribute act. After serving his country in the Army, Barker returned home to Missouri, took a job as a carpenter, and spent all of his free

time learning how to play the guitar. He developed strength and versatility in his voice by modeling his crooning on a cast of legends - Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly and Gene Vincent. His performances quickly turned from hobby to profession, but oddly enough, Barker’s first touring gigs were portraying Elvis, not Johnny Cash. Everything changed, however, when Barker was asked to audition for the part of Cash in a Hollywood production, as it became evident to the director and Barker himself that Johnny Cash was his true calling. From that point there was no turning back.

More information on The Man in Black: A Tribute to Johnny Cash can be found at <https://themaninblack.com/>.



SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Miller Auditorium announces partnership with Zhang Financial

COMMUNITY REPORT

KALAMAZOO — Miller Auditorium has announced that, in recognition of the generous support provided by Zhang Financial, the theatre located inside of Miller will officially bear the name Zhang Theatre.

Since 2018, Zhang Financial has served as the presenting sponsor of Miller’s Broadway in West Michigan Series. This milestone comes as part of a long-standing partnership between Zhang Financial and Miller Auditorium., states:

“Our long-standing support of Miller Auditorium stems from a deep belief in the transformative power of the arts,” said Lynn Chen-Zhang, CEO of Zhang Financial. “Miller Auditorium is not only a cornerstone of cultural enrichment in our community, but it also inspires creativity, fosters connection, and provides access to world-class performances. Supporting institutions like Miller is essential to ensuring that future generations have the opportunity to experience the magic of the performing arts. We are proud to contribute to this legacy and help sustain a vibrant arts culture for years to come.”

In addition to their support of Miller Auditorium, the Zhangs have contributed to various WMU programs, including the Charles and Lynn Zhang Legacy Collections Center, the Charles and Lynn Zhang Career Center at the Haworth College of Business, the Academically Talented Youth Program, and the Zhang Financial Room in Heritage Hall, to name a few.

Miller Auditorium officials believe the dedication of the new Zhang Theatre at Miller Auditorium is a testament to the Zhangs’ lasting impact on the arts and education in Kalamazoo. Thanks to the Zhang’s generosity, Miller Auditorium remains a vital cultural hub, offering world-class performances to the community.

Feeling the rhythm

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Coming out of Dowagiac Union High School in 1996 with the John Philip Sousa Award, music was “sort of the obvious path” for percussionist Carolyn Lyons Murray.

She received a music scholarship and began studying music education at Southwestern Michigan College, where she still performs in the theatre of the building named for her grandfather, Dale, longtime Board of Trustees vice chairman.

The Sister Lakes accountant, 46, has traveled as far on a music pathway than if she actually pursued a music career.

“I don’t think going to SMC was a given, but it definitely was the path that made the most sense for me,” Murray said. “I had been playing in ensembles at SMC since 10th grade. It was affordable and close to home. With my experience assisting at local band camps I quickly realized teaching was not my strong suit.

“Performance seemed like a very uncertain future and although I enjoyed my music classes — theory, ear training, all of it! —I knew that immersing myself in a four-year music performance path was going to take the enjoyment out of music for me pretty quickly. I love music being my fun hobby/side-gig.

“I have been able to continue to play music my entire life,” she said. “I met my husband through music (Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp). I continue to stay connected to SMC through the Brass Band as well as subbing with other groups. I don’t know that all of that would have happened had I actually pursued a music career.”

‘Accounting really resonated with me’

After transitioning away from music, Murray started focusing on general business classes. Accounting “really resonated with me. I think there are some very specific correlations between being a musician — percussion especially — and numbers. Everything balances. I was able to take advantage of the Ferris at SMC program and get my Bachelor’s in Accounting from Ferris without ever leaving the SMC campus.”

Murray this fall marked 10 years at Brammall Industrial Supply, which moved from 147 years in Benton Harbor to St. Joseph in 2020.

She is the financial controller for Brammall and also its sister company, Nemic Industrial Supply, Grand Rapids.

“Although we can ship anywhere in the U.S., the majority of our sales are regional (southwest Michigan up to Kalamazoo and Holland and a bit of northern Indiana). We specialize in personalized service including local delivery so you may see a Brammall Industrial Supply van tooling around now and then.

“Like most folks, I didn’t have a clear vision of my path when I was in college. I knew I didn’t want to do tax accounting. I was definitely drawn to accounting for manufacturing. I am fascinated by production facilities. I’m amazed that people make things and I like being part of that process. I am fortunate that I love what I do and have loved what I do for a long time. It was definitely the right path for me.”

Her first job was with the family meat market

Her family, parents Larry and Annette and brother Craig, all worked at Olde Town Meat Market, now part of the Cass County COA Front Street Crossing near City Hall.

“I think it was easier for our parents to teach us kids how to do one thing and let that be our main job, so I became the one who broke down chickens. My brother made sausage. I later bussed tables at Round Oak for quite a few years. I then worked at McCanse Chiropractic for a number of years, moving from chi-



Murray

ropractic assistant to insurance billing to office manager. I learned a lot about being an employee from working there — skills that continue to serve me very well to this day.”

Once she graduated with her accounting degree, Murray “found myself in that very precarious position of having a four-year degree but no experience. I began applying for accounting jobs but most either wanted someone with a degree and experience or were very entry-level not requiring any degree.

“I didn’t have a problem with the entry-level positions, but I think they overlooked my resume because of the degree thinking that I would require a higher pay-rate.

“I finally found a position at Pinnacle Building Systems, a modular home company in Bristol, Ind., doing accounts payable data entry. It was a small company and the CFO was willing to take a chance on me, giving me a starting position with the possibility of taking on additional responsibilities as time went on.

“I flourished in this position,” Murray said. “Soon I was doing payables, receivables and warranty work. When the controller retired I moved into that position. At the downturn of the housing market the company closed. I was the last employee on the books, staying with them through the final auction of remaining assets.”

The owner of Pinnacle Building Systems also happened to own an ambulance company in Elkhart. So upon Pinnacle closing, Murray began working for SJC Industries, manufacturer of Marque and McCoy Miller ambulances.

She moved into chassis purchasing, the only position open in the company at that time.

“Did I know anything about purchasing or chassis? Absolutely not! But it was fun to learn,” she said. “Later I moved into a cost accounting position where I was able to work out in the plant, recording and costing all of the materials going into our products. This was an awesome job. There are so many amazingly smart folks working in production factories doing very skilled and intricate things. Blows my mind!”

After a number of years working with this company, the business was sold and production moved to Florida.

“I again was in the last of the people remaining at the Indiana location, helping to run a repair and remount division serving local customers until they transitioned all services to Florida. So then I was on the job hunt! I worked with a professional placement agency which referred me to Brammall Industrial Supply. I was very excited to work for a family-owned business with such an amazing history in the community. Plus, it was much closer to home. I transitioned into a position made available as the former controller, who had worked at the company for 30 years, was retiring. All of my prior jobs led me here. Although it is not manufacturing — we are a distribution warehouse — it is the perfect fit.

“We serve the manufacturing community and I feel that I have a lot to offer in this position. I’ve been an integral part of this company’s management team through many changes including the sale of the business to another family out of Grand Rapids. I am so thankful that they trust me to grow in their business with them.

Like father, like daughter

Murray credits her father, who ended his outdoor columns with “carpe diem” (seize the day), for her wide range of interests, from raising goats to roller derby.

“He was one to follow his heart when pursuing new careers, hobbies and ex-

periences,” she said. Ryan, her former police officer husband of 24 years, “is also a man of many interests, so we’ve always been very supportive of just going for it! Nothing is forever, so why miss out on trying something you want to do?”

“We did meet through music,” she said. “And we both still play,” Ryan on trombone.

“He has become very involved in Beckwith Theatre as actor, director, leader of their improv group and director of their summer youth camp” with SMC’s Educational Talent Search.

“I have done a little bit of acting on stage,” Murray said, “but it’s not really my thing. I do really enjoy playing in musical pit orchestras, though, and have been doing quite a bit more of that the past few years. I had a lot of fun playing in the pit orchestra for the DUHS musical he directed in the spring. It’s the first time we’ve gotten to work together in that way.”

Her musical path intersects with Mom

She’s played snare drum with bagpipe bands and all manner of percussion, including timpani, marimbas, xylophone and bells.

Murray performs regularly with the SMC Brass Band, occasionally subs with the St. Joseph Municipal Band and plays for various musical theatre performances at the Ghostlight Theatre, Benton Harbor.

“I sub occasionally with the SMC Symphonic Band, where my mom plays clarinet,” she said. “She’s a two-time SMC alum. She went to SMC after high school and met my dad. Then we both attended SMC simultaneously while I was getting my accounting degree and she pursued her nursing degree. We actually graduated at the same time. I don’t remember when she started playing her clarinet again, but she really enjoys playing in the Symphonic Band. It’s always fun when we get to play concerts together.”

Through high school she was definitely a concert percussionist who did not play drum set.

I just never had the experience doing it and there were always those kids who grew up messing around on drum sets and were so much more comfortable with it,” Murray said. “I played a tiny bit in college when forced. But in the last few years I have started playing quite a bit more drum set and am really coming to enjoy it. I’m learning I’m not so bad at it after all! It just takes some practice.”

Someday she might sing again

As a Roadrunner, Murray played in all of SMC’s instrumental groups, Symphonic Band, Brass Band and Jazz Ensemble. She sang with the Concert Choir and Show Choir.

“I have decent pitch,” she said. “Probably all those years tuning timpani. But I’ve never really trained my voice to sing. Someday I might like to do that.”

She knows new Dowagiac Band Director Benny Van Roekel. Paw Paw tenor saxophonist, from playing with him at SMC multiple times.

“He seems to be a really great guy and a really great musician. I’m very excited for him and for the students at Dowagiac who get to work with him.”

“My favorite memories of SMC are actually from before I was an official SMC student,” Murray said. “I was in high school, searching out additional playing opportunities. (Band Director) Dr.(Jon) Korzun took me under his wing and I started playing in the bands. There was a special group of vocal and instrumental folks at SMC at that time. A pretty large group of really talented people worked under (Choir Director) Dr. (William) Skoog and Dr. Korzun.

“They all just allowed me to be a part of it which made me feel so amazing at the time. The confidence boost was out of this world! And I’m still friends with some of them to this day.”



- ARCADE AND VR GAMES • INDOOR ROLLERCOASTER
- LASER TAG • BOWLING • AXE THROWING
- BILLIARDS • BAR • FOOD

\$2 DOMESTIC BEERS
SATURDAY NIGHT KARAOKE
HOME OF THE FAMOUS BUTTER CHICKEN FRIES



SCAN